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ABSTRACT

A compilation of five journal issues describing facts and daily life in the Soviet Union, the documents are intended to help people of the United States know about the people of the Soviet Union, their hopes, fears, and facts of their daily lives. Among the topics included in the publications are: Soviet consumers and the law; public health problems and solutions; religious beliefs; views on divorce; village life; urbanization and industrialization; personal accounts; Soviet youth; the disabled; family life; alcoholism; sports; and the marriage market. Special features included in most of the articles are: maps highlighting mentioned areas, a glossary of terms used, bibliographical references, suggestions for further reading, and editors' notes and comments. (TRS)

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The Station Relay

Facts and Views on Daily Life in the Soviet Union

Volume I, No. 1-5

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Highgate Road Social Science Research Station

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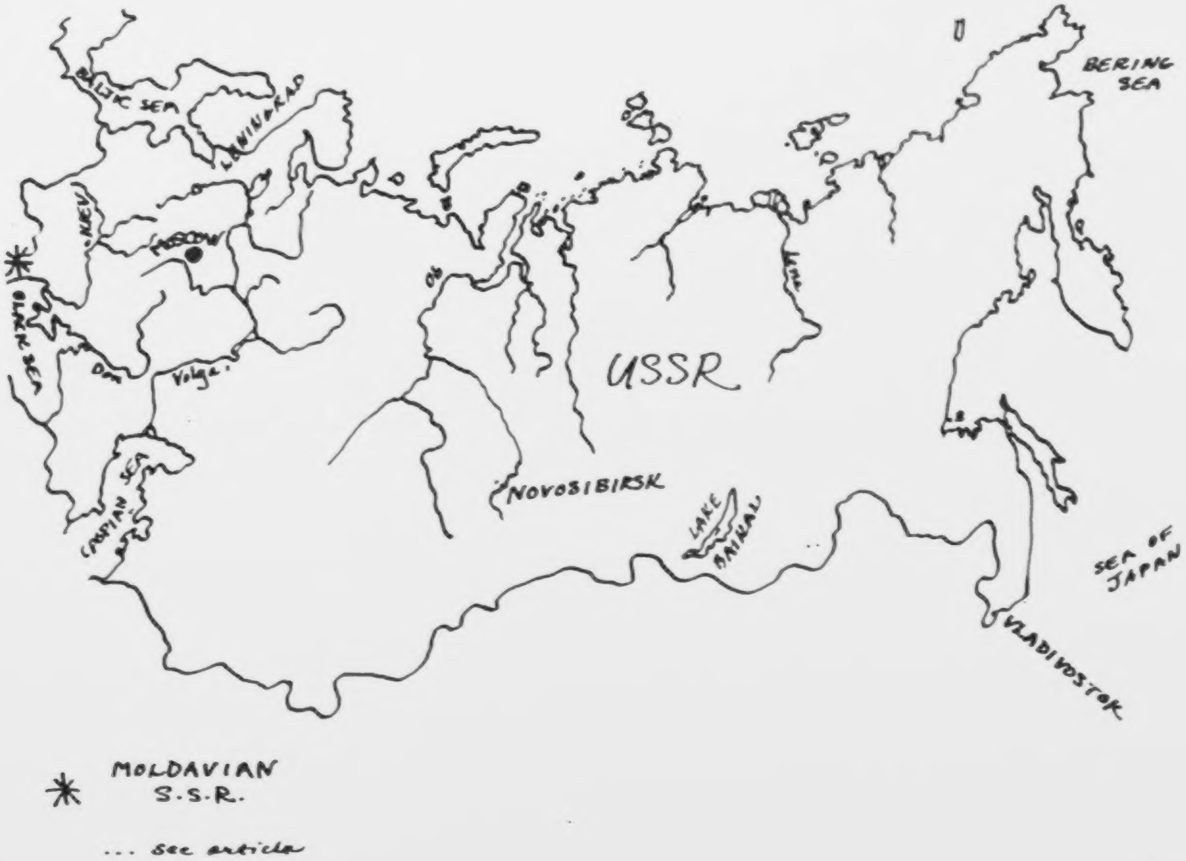
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We express our thanks to Catherine Trowbridge, an Oakland artist, for her drawing of the Matrёnushka doll on our masthead. This nested doll is a popular Russian toy.

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Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers:

You are the reason The Station Relay exists.

Highgate Road Social Science Research Station's task is to provide in its journal materials of lively interest to you. To accomplish this, we must be more than merely informed, intelligent, experienced, and intuitive -- we must be in touch. We want to hear from you: your questions and comments will be important guides for us in future issues. More than that, we hope some of you will occasionally let us share your reactions with your fellow-readers by publishing them in these pages. Among other things, we will welcome the observations of returned travellers. We cannot promise to print every item we receive, but we will read all submissions with interest and and will respond to the best of our abilities.

Thank you for taking part in our venture thus far. Please do not stop here; let us hear from you so that The Station Relay can become, as we believe it should, a real forum for the exchange of ideas and information about life in the Soviet Union.

Yours truly,

The Editors

WE MADE A SURVEY

Highgate Road Social Science Research Station has for many years studied the life of the peoples of the USSR, both from newspapers and from reports by sociologists and cultural anthropologists in scholarly journals. We believe that much of this material will be as fascinating to the ordinary English-reading public as is it to us, and that is one reason we have begun The Station Relay.

We asked 76 high school students: "If you could have a heart-to-heart talk with Soviet students, what would you ask them?" The answers cover a wide range, but in general they show more awareness than American high school students are often given credit for. For example:

> What do Soviet young people do for fun and entertainment?
>
> What do they think of our government relative to theirs?
>
> How do they feel about world poverty and other current issues?
>
> What do they like to eat? -- Are there McDonalds, Burger Kings, or the equivalent?
>
> What rules do they have to live by?
>
> What's "in" in fashions, makeup, jewelry, and hairstyles?
>
> How do the mass media affect their daily lives?
>
> Would they like to visit the US?
>
> What are the consequences of protest against the government? What is it like, for instance, if a family member defects?
>
> Do they believe in God? How are religious people treated?
>
> What are sexual mores like?
>
> Are there any Black people or other distinct racial minorities?
>
> What's the situation with regard to the supply of consumer goods? Are the reports of long lines and so forth that we see on American TV accurate?

This, of course, is only a selection, and some of the items summarize many slightly different questions proposed by our group.

Every issue of The Station Relay will try to answer such questions, using Soviet newspapers, which don't just give the news. Some people say they don't give news at all. The Soviet newspaper is a forum -- a very well-managed one -- for talking about what is wrong with the economy and with Soviet life. Soviet emigres have told us how bored they were with their newspapers, but we think that if you know how to read the press, you can get a good idea of what is going on. There are some topics that the Soviet papers just don't talk about -- just as there are some that ours don't.

As in ours, there are a fair number of exposes. For example, Izvestiia, acting in response to letters to the paper (20/VII/85: 2), put one of its best reporters on an investigation of the problem of heating houses and apartments during the winter. Heating is not only a problem in Moscow. It affects nearly everyone all over the Soviet Union. The Executive Committees of local Soviets are charged with seeing that the problem is solved. Many factors will influence how well they will do; if construction is faulty, or spare parts are not available, the problem is then more than local and must be solved through centralized planning. A solution filters down slowly to the local level.

Judge for yourself whether Izvestiia is mechanically following a line, or being critical:

(Continued on page 4)

A woman writes from Moldavia that a commission of two people was established to look into her complaint, which took the form of a letter to Izvestiia. The commission arrived in April, during warm weather, inspected her apartment, and said that since everything was normal, it was a waste of time to have written to the newspaper.

Another woman writes from the Siberian city of Bratsk (where one of the largest hydroelectric stations in the Soviet Union was built) that for an entire winter they heated their apartment with electricity which cost them 40 rubles a month. (The average monthly wage of an industrial worker in 1981 was 190 rubles; in Bratsk, it could be double that, but the cost of food and clothing would also be higher, so the advantage, while significant, is not twice as much. Forty rubles a month is a lot of money to pay for heating, even though the apartment is probably furnished for nominal rent.)

Kindergarten #48 in the city of Bel'tsy (in Moldavia) was without heat during the winter, but this was the least of their problems: they were flooded by hot water from a broken water main. This is an ironic problem if you know that quite a few houses in the Soviet Union still lack running water, let alone hot water.

SOVIET CONSUMERS AND THE LAW

Izvestiia makes frequent attempts to explain the law to consumers. Recently (14/II/85: 3) it explained to a World War II veteran that the automobile with hand controls he had been given is for his personal use, and the accent is on use. He can't transfer that to anybody and he can't sell it either. He has a contract with the Social Security Office, but if he doesn't take care of the automobile the contract can be dissolved before the end of the stated period; for example, this might also happen if he were convicted of drunk driving and lost his license. This law does have an exception in Latvia and Estonia, where apparently if the disabled person loses his license the automobile sits for the period of time he has been deprived of the right to drive.

In Novosibirsk (a large Siberian city), a man complained about the weather-stripping on his walls, which failed completely from the very beginning. The walls will finally be fixed, because "it's tough in summer, but really terrible in a Siberian frost."

The reporter concludes that the time for the local Soviets to think about winter is the middle of summer, when much can be done. Just how much will depend on the skill of local deputies. Elections to the Supreme Soviets of Union and Autonomous Republics and to local Soviets of Working People's Deputies were held on February 24, 1985. There are 15 Union Republics, 20 Autonomous Republics, and 52,041 local Soviets. Even though there is only one political party (the Communist Party), many (about a third) of the delegates are non-party. Whether party or non-party, their election is a signal that they are considered the brightest and the best. At the local level, 47.4% were elected for the first time, 34.3% are under 30 years of age, and 50.3% of the delegates are women, (Izvestiia II/85). ■

The same article makes clear that Soviet booklovers had better not lose books or fail to return them because the law is that the fine can be ten times the cost of the book. One young boy found this out when he lost a Soviet encyclopedia which costs 20 rubles and 80 kopeks. The fine was 208 rubles! The young man does have a way out, however; he can give the library a book of equal value.

As further illustration of the way Soviet law works, we also have the case of a man from Novosibirsk who stayed at a hotel on a business trip, during which his clothes and an imported electric shaver and some other things were stolen

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SOVIET CONSUMERS AND THE LAW

(Continued from page 4)

from him. The hotel administration refused to pay the cost of these items, since he had not given them for safekeeping. How, the man wanted to know, was he supposed to give his electric shaver for safekeeping every day, and still have it to shave with early in the morning? The lawyer answers that the hotel is indeed obliged to return the cost of the stolen property because the hotel is obliged to take due care for the preservation of the property of people who stay there. The hotel would only be released from this legal obligation by what seem equivalent to Acts of God, [the phrase used is "a force which could not be overcome."]

It seems that Soviet consumers are becoming increasingly aware. In a commentary carefully labelled "For Discussion Purposes," G. Gromov, a senior research scholar at the Academy of Sciences USSR Computer Research Center, proposes that as the use of personal computers increases, it might be well to establish a system whereby the consumer rents the computer from the manufacturer and pays for it only as long as the computer works. When the computer stops working, rental payments also cease. This system would, he suggests, increase incentives to produce high quality computers.

At present all existing legal means of exerting pressure on producers for shoddy goods or services have been ineffective. [In at least one case we know of, in which a woman's TV set exploded the day after she purchased it, the woman was held entitled to sue the store that sold her the set, because the bill of sale constituted a contract, but was not able to sue the manufacturer; that unhappy right rested with the store, which, until very recently probably had to accept whatever goods it was given.]

PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS THE COUNTRYSIDE

Some of the problems of the Soviet public health system appear in a description of the sovkhoz Gorokhovetskii, Gorokhovetskii raion, Vladimir Oblast, which includes more than thirty villages. People are brought to the central settlement in order to have a check-up and this means overcoming the natural psychological barrier which occurs when people say "Why should I see the doctor, I'm not sick?" There is a remote district hospital in this region, the Denisov district hospital, thirty kilometers away. The chief physician of this hospital is a woman named Liudmilla Alikhanovna Khetagurova, a graduate of the North Ossetian Medical Institute [by nationality, she is probably Ossete]. She has been working in this particular spot for thirteen years [which is relatively unusual; the turnover in doctors is quite high, particularly in remote localities.] The village of Denisovo has a knit-goods factory and the presence of this factory permits the hospital to be relatively well equipped. Not long ago funds for a new set of equipment for the dentist's office were given. The factory also keeps the building in repair; for instance, it recently put in a new boiler, and while it was doing that it hooked the hospital up to central heating. They also equipped the physical therapy room. The district hospital staff also visits the surrounding villages, literally going from house to house. A pharmacy travelled along with it. The raion is said to be typical for Vladimir Oblast, having nine kolkhozy and sokhvozy and various industrial enterprises. Considerable construction is going on; in particular, they have improved the roads -- the lack of roads being one of the chief problems that the Soviet Union has in supplying towns and villages. In the course of travelling around, the medical group turned up 1200 people who needed medical aid [most probably these were elderly people and pregnant women and small children].

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DO PEOPLE IN THE SOVIET UNION BELIEVE IN GOD? IF THEY DO, HOW ARE THEY TREATED?

We choose this question to answer in our first issue because it is one which tells a great deal about life in a multi-ethnic society, where, in the past, the non-Russian, non-Russian Orthodox peoples were discriminated against, much as the United States' ethnic minorities have been in the past. Since the revolution, the Soviet regime has insisted that it is an atheistic state, and it contrasts its own "scientific" view of the world to that of believers. The state also wants to know if its people believe in God, a question not easily answered. Soviet sociological studies have shown that whether a person thinks of himself or herself as religious has little to do with belief in God. Opinions vary as widely in the Soviet Union as elsewhere about the nature of God. A believer is considered to be a person who acts on his or her religious beliefs. It is, in other words, what people do rather than what they think that the state considers suspect or dangerous. People (including Communist Party members, who consider themselves atheist) often attend religious services and gatherings because everyone else does, and the occasion is therefore not thought of as religious. In many cases a ceremony which is outwardly religious is considered a mark of ethnic status. This is particularly true among non-Russian peoples such as the traditionally Moslem ethnic groups of Central Asia, the Lithuanians, the Armenians, and some others. William C. Fletcher (1981: 212-213) estimates that there are probably 115 million Soviet believers or 45% of the total population. All observers agree that the majority are female and elderly, but there is a recent trend toward youth. Over the Soviet Union as a whole, between 5% and 12% are under thirty years of age. The percentage will vary widely by region, because if a new city or town or even an old village has relatively few facilities for entertainment, young people will be more attracted to the churches for the singing, the ritual, the artistic elements of worship and for the sense of communion (both with family and with a larger group). Baptists and Pentecostal groups in particular are said to be adroit at adapting folk songs and current pop tunes for religious purposes. (For an indication of the extent to which religious values are preserved by the family, see Ethel Dunn 1982-1984: 68-69.)

The Soviet government maintains strict control over all religous bodies, with officially approved groups like the Russian Orthodox Church and registered Baptist congegrations having relative degrees of freedom. Others, like Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and dissident Baptists who refuse to register their churches, or insist on bearing witness to their faith, frequently receive fines, dismissal from jobs with good pay and high visibility, limited access to education and professional advancement, and, in some cases, unofficial harrassment. A significant number of leaders of religious groups have been exiled or imprisoned. (For a convenient summary of the tension between the state and believers in recent years see Ludmilla Alexeyeva (1985: 201-264.) On the other hand, children do attend religious services, as was clear from the recent television documentary dealing with Billy Graham's evangelistic tour to the Soviet Union. There is a difference between attending a service and receiving religious instruction, however. Teaching children religion is against Soviet law, and the courts are empowered to deprive parents of their parental rights if the court thinks that the child is being harmed by his or her parents' religious beliefs. In other cases -- where one or both parents are alcoholics, for example -- the courts are much slower and even clearly reluctant to act.

The state conducts a fairly constant and far from sophisticated antireligious campaign against believers. In the 1970s, the main journal for antireligious and atheistic propaganda, Nauka i religiia (Science and Religion), mentioned a Baptist woman who had been let go from several jobs "at her own request." Because she didn't hide her religious convictions, in one of her places of employment, she saw her caricature in the wall newspaper (a news sheet published in factories and organizations to give internal news and propaganda), next to the picture of a hooligan (the Soviet word for a disturber of the peace) and a drunkard, as much as to say, like peas in a pod. She was also illegally deprived of a prize, usually given for outstanding work. Considering the persistent problems with labor turnover --people leaving their jobs for one reason or another, usually to find a better job --such treatment is remarkably shortsighted (Dunn and Dunn 1974: I, 38).

In recent years, there have been newspaper and magazine articles in the Soviet Union suggesting that proper ideological vigilance does not require offending the dignity of believers. [By Soviet law, one citizen may sue another for slander; to our knowledge no one has yet sued an anti-religious journalist.] Vigilance is considered necessary because all religious bodies in the Soviet Union have ties with similar groups in the East or West, and the Soviet regime believes itself to be under constant threat of attack and subversion. Moslems living in Central Asia and Kazakhstan continue to identify strongly with their heritage, and, as it suits them on an international level, the Soviets will use Moslem as well as Protestant and Russian Orthodox clergy to present a picture of the Soviet Union as a peace-loving, tolerant country -- as indeed it is for those who do not go beyond what is ideologically acceptable.

The Jews continue to be an exception to every rule. In the Soviet Union, Jews are considered an ethnic group and have "Jew" stamped on the passport every citizen is obliged to carry, yet one criterion of ethnic affiliation is language, and most Jews in the USSR speak Russian. More than 250,000 Soviet Jews have emigrated since 1979, some alleging discrimination against Jews. It is true that Jews must compete with other ethnic groups (there are more than 120) for jobs and status. It is also unfortunately true that residual anti-Semitism remains at many levels. Nevertheless, Jews make up a high proportion of the professional, cultural, and artistic elite of the Soviet Union. (For more details, see William M. Mandel 1985: 207-349.) In recent years, Jews still in the Soviet Union who have insisted on their right to be religious have received prison sentences on various pretexts. One observing Jew, according to Keston News Service is serving a three year sentence in a labor camp for "possession of narcotics" -- a startling charge, since, to our knowledge, there have been no official acknowledgments that a drug problem exists in the USSR.

On the whole, religious dissidents -- in fact, dissidents of any kind -- are relatively few in number, and, apparently, politically fragmented and isolated. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, who was a founding member of the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group (monitoring Soviet performance in the area of civil rights) reports than in 1979 a group calling itself Elections 79 advanced one of its members, an engineer named Lyudmila Agapova, as a candidate to the Soviet of Nationalities (a deliberative body like the U.S. Congress in size) and Roy Medvedev (a "legal" dissident) as a candidate to the Supreme Soviet. "The group submitted registration papers for their candidates, but did not receive a response in time to meet the deadline stipulated by election regulations. On these grounds the appropriate election commission refused to register their candidates" (Alexeyeva 1985: 350).

The importance of a cause or an issue, however, cannot always be measured in numbers. The regime seems to take dissent very seriously, and the consequences for individuals, some of them extremely high-minded, can be tragic. Only those who speak out can ever change an unsatisfactory system, a fact that the regime itself recognizes every day in its newspapers, books, and magazines as it exhorts its citizens to still greater efforts to build socialism and a still very distant communism. ■

PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS

(Continued from page 5)

The sovkhoz Gorokhovetskii took upon itself the construction of new shops, including a shower and places where people could spend their leisure time. Last autumn they also built a new dining facility for fifty-five diners, and they also plan to offer dietetic foods for people who suffer with stomach complaints. The trade union took upon itself a considerable portion of the cost of this facility. The kolkhoz May First built a facility for technical services and a new shop where labor conditions are quite good, but not all the farms are so forward-looking. In the sovkhoz Denisov the equipment operators are working in cramped and drafty quarters where there are no places to rest and wash up. The correspondent (Izvestiia, 22/II/85:3) also expresses concern that the sovkhoz Fominskii and the kolkhoz New Life have not built new storage facilities for mineral fertilizer and pesticides. Given the shortage of doctors in the region, the reporter says, the new technology ought to be introduced to make the work of the doctor easier because the doctor is the one who fills out all kinds of reports. The town of Gorokhovetsk has begun to build a new polyclinic which could handle 600 visits a day, and they plan a physical therapy department.

In contrast to the situation in Vladimir Oblast, there is Privolzhsk raion, Ivanovo Oblast from which the chief of the feldsher-midwife point writes that her facility takes care of 700 people. [A feldsher-midwife point is a medical facility, usually without a doctor, but supposedly supervised by one. Both feldshers and midwives are considered "intermediate medical personnel," but, although the number of villages served by such points is declining, the role of the feldsher-midwife in rural areas is still very great.]
The director of the sovkhoz considers the doctor a foreigner because she doesn't, strictly speaking, work on the sovkhoz (although her husband works with the local land reclamation facility) and his main desire is to provide for his own sovkhoz specialists . Her house, in which she lived for a quarter of a century, burned down. She turned to the sovkhoz for help and they didn't give it, with the result that she walks more than 14 kilometers a day [!] getting back and forth to work. Because she has no housing on the sovkhoz, she lives in Privolzhsk. She also asked the administration to help with the repair of the central heating and was told by the economist that that was the affair of the medical people (Sel'skaia zhizn', 20/II/85:4).

GROWING UP IN MOLDAVIA

Moldavia is the smallest Soviet republic, bordered on the west by Rumania (with which it shares a similar language and political history) and on the east by the Ukraine. It has been part of the Soviet Union since 1944 and has been changed from one of the poorest parts to one of the better places to live, largely because of a favorable climate and a relatively successful agricultural economy. According to William Mandel (1985: 102) 50 nationalities live in Moldavia. Until recently, Moldavians lived mostly in rural areas, but with

(Continued on page 9)

UKRAINIAN S.S.R.
Bel'tsy
MOLDAVIAN S.S.R.
Kishinev
Prut R.
ROMANIA
Kagul
BLACK SEA

GROWING UP IN MOLDAVIA

(Continued from page 8)

increasing industrialization, "urban sprawl" has become a problem in some parts of the republic. Moldavia in 1981-1983 provided 13% of the fruits and vegetables, 21% of the wine grapes, and 32% of the Soviet Union's tobacco. Moldavia's food industry produced 14% of the canned fruits and vegetables, 14% of its wine, and about 25% of its wine byproducts (Vestnik statistiki 1985 No. 5, p. 61).

The Soviet Union is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual state. More than 62,000,000 Soviet citizens reported in 1979 that Russian was for them a fluent second language. Russians are the least bilingual (less than one percent) of all Soviet peoples, but in Moldavia, more than a fifth of rural Russians are bilingual, and there is some preference for schooling in Moldavian among Russians who move to Moldavian cities (see Ethel Dunn 1982-1984: 60).

High school students in our survey (see lead story) wanted to know what their Soviet counterparts did with their leisure time, but most of all, what they thought about life. We present here a study done by scholars in the sector for sociological research, Division of Philosophy and Law, Academy of Sciences Moldavian SSR.* 1340 students aged 14-17 in grades 7, 8, and 10 were surveyed along with 276 juvenile delinquents and 549 of their parents.

There is a considerable amount of conflict in the families, which the adolescents witness; 3 in 7 delinquents and 1 in 7 out of the control group reported constant disagreements in their families. [The divorce rate in Moldavia is above the average for the USSR as a whole.] 54% of the parents said they lacked the pedagogical skills to raise their children; 40% said they were burdened with work, and 6% admitted to poor family conditions. More youngsters (more than 60%) felt that their fathers had lost authority than that their mothers had (46%). In the control group, 84.4% had a good relationship with mother, and 70.2% with father. 74% of the delinquents said their family drank. Among the parents of delinquents, 65% had 4-8 grades of schooling, whereas 70% of the parents in the control group had secondary or higher education.

In the control group, 56% helped their parents to buy produce (thereby taking part in one of the family's most important and most time-consuming activities); 60% helped around the house, 49% helped in the family garden, and 41% helped with the family livestock.

(Continued on page 10)

Table 1
Occupation of Adolescents, % of Those Surveyed

	Delinquents			Control Group of Schoolchildren		
Types of Occupation	Regularly	Sometimes	Not at All	Regularly	Sometimes	Not at All
Sport	27.2	27.9	25.0	37.7	42.5	5.4
Looking at T.V.	55.4	18.1	11.0	66.4	20.6	1.9
Listening to the Radio	46.4	23.2	12.3	67.2	19.3	1.2
Reading the Newspaper or Magazines	22.8	29.3	27.5	51.5	30.0	2.5
Reading Fiction	12.7	23.6	40.6	47.4	32.3	2.5
Going to the Movies	22.1	44.2	26.5	17.4	66.3	3.4
Going to the Theatre or Concerts	4.7	10.9	51.6	7.8	47.3	16.8
Going to Dances	16.3	22.5	30.2	1.7	6.4	69.3
Visiting with Friends	43.8	32.5	15.0	37.2	42.5	20.3
Occupied in Various Clubs	12.3	39.2	43.2	18.3	20.1	26.6

GROWING UP IN MOLDAVIA

(Continued from page 9)

Asked on what the achievement of personal goals depended, 21% said steadfastness, 19% said education, another 19% named industriousness, 11% personal acquaintance and 10% cited the social position of their family. These figures imply that more than a fifth of all the children in the sample thought that whether they succeeded in life depends on external circumstances; that is, it's not what you know, it's whom you know. The Soviet researcher seems a bit shocked by his own data, since he comments that you can't really tell attitudes from a survey of behavior. He thinks the delinquents are a bit sneaky in this respect, but notice that more than a quarter of non-delinquent (control group) children belong to no clubs (Table 1). In Soviet conditions, this is a danger signal.

Teachers did little to correct the distaste one quarter of young people surveyed felt for school, and 37% of teachers knew nothing about went on in their pupils' families.

Table 2
The Attitude of Adolescents to Study on the Basis of Achievement and Attendance

(as a percent of the total number of factors discovered in the study)

Achievement and Attendance (School, Professional-Technical School, Tekhnikum)	Juvenile Delinquents	Control Group of Schoolchildr
Excellent	1.1	7
Good	22.1	36.3
Average	38	30.3
Average, but with C's	10	1.2
Poor, kept back for a second year	8	0.0
Always came to lessons prepared	18.5	46.5
Sometimes skipped lessons	48.2	19.0
Almost always skipped lessons	14.1	2.0

Table 3
Attitude toward Alcohol on the Part of the Juvenile Delinquents, %

Attitude	Studying	Working	Not Working
Condemn those who drink	15.5	16.3	20.0
Do not condemn, but themselves do not drink	16.9	25.6	20.0
Use alcoholic beverages	52.1	38.4	40.0
Seldom use	12.7	17.4	10.0

Tables 1 and 2 show how the young people spend time both in and out of school. Tables 3 and 4 show the attitude toward alcohol. Unlike what has been reported for other areas of the Soviet Union, there is less drinking in rural areas in Moldavia.

Table 4
Frequency of Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages by Juvenile Delinquents Depending on Place of Residence, % of Those Surveyed

Frequency of Use	City	Settlement of Urban Type	Village
Daily	17.8	12.8	5.8
2-3 times a week	28.7	33.3	19.2
Once a week	29.5	33.3	19.2
Do not consume	16.5	15.4	28.8

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* I.G. Batku, "Nekotorye sotsial'nye aspekty bor'by s pravonarusheniiami sredi podrostkov" [SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE FIGHT WITH LEGAL VIOLATIONS AMONG ADOLESCENTS], Izvestiia Akademii nauk Moldavskoi SSR, Seriia obshchestvennykh nauk, 1985, No. 1, pp. 41-47.

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GLOSSARY

Soviets: (In full: Soviets of Working People's Deputies.) A legislative council -- on any one of a number of levels. In Soviet usage the category of "working people" includes the entire population, since there is no one who doesn't work (or hasn't worked) for a living.

Supreme Soviet: The highest legislative council, either of the USSR or one of its constituent units.

Union Republic: One of the constituent units of the USSR on the highest level; there are 26 in all.

Autonomous Republic: A constituent unit of a Union Republic.

Oblast: The largest political and administrative subdivision, usually centered around a large city.

Raion: A smaller political and administrative subdivision roughly comparable to an American county. The larger cities are also divided into raions, formerly called urban raions.

Kolkhoz, or "Collective Farm": An agricultural organization owned jointly by its members who are also its work force. Kolkhozy are, in formal terms, independent of the state.

Sovkhoz: A state owned agricultural organization whose work force consists of "workers" (rabochie) rather than "peasants" (krestiane) or "collective farmers" (kolkhozniki).

Feldsher: A physician's assistant with specialized secondary education, who often practices independently in rural areas, consulting a physician only for severe or complicated cases.

The Station Relay

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SOME FEATURES OF THE STATION RELAY

A map highlighting areas mentioned in the issue....

A glossary of terms used....

Bibliographical references....

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The Highgate Road Social Science Research Station is a non-profit, tax-exempt educational and research institution, incorporated in the State of California since 1969. The Station is devoted to research in and dissemination of information about Soviet social sciences, particularly anthropology and sociology. We are the only organization, to our knowledge, which carries on almost full-time research in Soviet social science.

The Station maintains a specialized library in ethnography, sociology, sociology of religion, economics, philosophy, public health, demography, and history. We maintain subscriptions to over thirty Soviet journals and newspapers, and some of our library holdings are, we believe, unique in this country.

The Station stands ready to assist social scientists and the general public with specialized information in the field of Soviet social science, and its facilities are open for use by qualified scholars.

Comments and inquiries in regard to the work of the Station are welcome. Contributions are tax-deductible.

The Station logo, at left, is one version of the ancient Slavic Tree of Life

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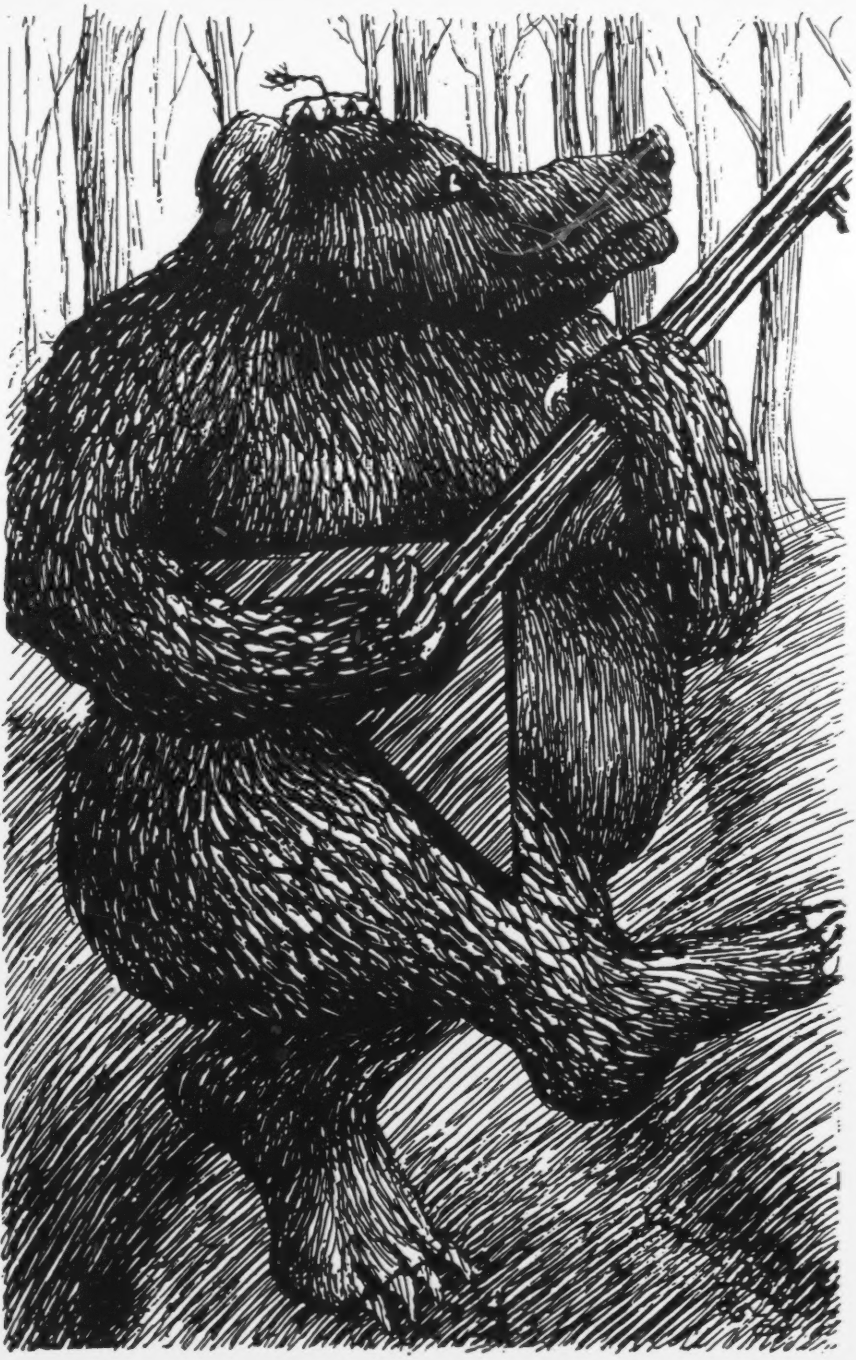
The Station Relay

Facts and views on daily life in the Soviet Union
Volume 1, No. 2 November, 1985



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CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors

Dear Editors:

The Station Relay looks great, but 1) please run all articles straight onto the next page, not just some; 2) please always draw full lines across page between articles; and, 3) unless you're aiming to put out at least twenty issues a year, $25 a year seems high for the high-school-and-early-college-years audience (or, probably teachers and school/college libraries)... When I compare it with what I have been getting in three issues a year for Focus on Asia (initially $5.00, now $8.00, and possibly going up to $10.00), it's extremely high because that not only does something like yours with a focus in each issue on one country or a topic like "farmers," but also has all kinds of film-lists, book-lists, and tips-for-teachers-lists in each of those quite large issues. Also "Ossete" did not make the glossary, and one has NO idea from the public-health article where Vladimir Oblast is. I think it would be neat to carry current information on the US-USSR exchange rate for rubles and kopeks. But the concepts and the contents are terrific. I will look forward eagerly to future issues [and I] mean to turn all issues over to the Albion College Library.

Robina Quale
Professor of History
Albion College

From the Editors

Dear Readers:

When we told you, in the last issue of The Station Relay that Moldavia was the smallest republic in the Soviet Union, we were wrong. The smallest republic in terms of territory is Armenia, and in terms of population, Estonia. Thus we reaffirm our intention to learn something new every day.

We'd like to answer some of Professor Quale's questions in her Letter to the Editors. The Ossetes are a Caucasian people (ethnic group) numbering 542,000. The area of settlement is between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Dagestan, which is the locale of our story "Love and the Judges," is just below the area occupied by the Ossetes. Vladimir Oblast is northeast of Moscow. The whole question of how many rubles to how many dollars, raised by Professor Quale, is too complicated for a mere editorial response. The point is that sometimes a ruble in the Soviet Union has greater buying power than an American dollar here, especially when paying the rent, for example, but not, if you remember the story on heating in our last issue, when paying the heating bills.

As for the price of our publication: we are a new venture, with no grants or support, except from our readers. If support for our efforts grows, we have a wealth of material and new topics to offer. Naturally, we think we are a bargain at any price, but we do intend to get better!

Also in this issue, we publish some reflections on the past summer's trip to the Soviet Union by Eugenia Miller, who modestly refrains from remarking that her training is that of a historian of medieval history. She teaches a course in Soviet studies at Albany High School, Albany, California.

Have you made a trip to the Soviet Union you'd like to tell us about? Do you have any suggestions for us? Let us hear from you, so that we can grow together!

Sincerely,

The Editors

A SUMMER TRIP TO THE USSR

by Eugenia Miller, Editor
The Station Relay

For the last eleven years, every trip I have made to the Soviet Union has been my "last trip," but something gets into the blood of a real Russophile and keeps bringing him back for one more visit. A Russian friend once asked me if I would like to be a Soviet citizen and stay. As gently as possible, I declined, reminding him that although it is great to visit, it is even better to go home. My first visit was made in 1974 under the auspices of the University of California and included a three week stay in Leningrad. It is difficult to write about my most recent trip without including images from the past. What follows may seem a little like sorting through a box of jumbled snapshots or reading over a travel diary whose pages have got out of order . . .

The first-time visitor is in for a lot of surprises; most of them are pleasant. For example, public transportation in the big cities is, in my opinion, the best in the world, and certainly the most economical. Contrary to what many people believe, Soviets are dressing better and better. I witnessed a wedding party in Odessa in which the women guests were really elegantly dressed, and the bride's gown was as pretty a summer bridal outfit as I have ever seen. A couple of years ago in Erevan and Tblisi, I thought the summer dresses were quite attractive and varied. Eleven years ago, this was not the case. Now you can even buy Russian chewing gum and an American soft drink -- and the prices in the stores are higher every year -- just as at home.

As for art treasures, the Hermitage houses a collection of Scythian gold, but permission to see it must usually be obtained in advance, so the tourist must plan ahead. The second half of the collection is in the Kiev National Museum in the Pecherskaya Lavra. Your guide will never tell you, but just by getting to the Lavra early and buying a 40 kopek ticket, you can see what I consider some of the most beautiful ancient gold pieces anywhere.

The Russian Museum in Leningrad is my favorite museum. Here you can see a huge collection of the work of Russian artists. Upstairs, sometimes, there is a superb collection of the decorated black lacquer boxes from Palekh, a traditional center of this peasant craft. As a modest collector of these, I enjoy sighing over so many exquisite boxes.

Soviet architecture has always drawn me for further visits. Around Moscow are the medieval cities with their architectural treasurers. Do not miss the wooden church collection up north in Kizhi. I like being with the crowds in Red Square, and I never tire of looking at St. Basil's Cathedral in sun, rain, or fog. Moscow is now converting the Arbat (a thoroughfare resembling upper Park Avenue in New York) into a pedestrian mall. Already there are many interesting shops, some quite expensive. In the middle of the street were wooden flower boxes planted with, incredibly, Bird-of-Paradise plants. The area holds promise of being charming when completed.

To see villages and get the feel of one of the greatest rivers in Europe, take a cruise up the Volga. The ships are new and modern. The journey begins on the Don River and takes you through all the locks to reach the Volga.

For the feel of the pioneers' or exiles' life, go to the more primitive cities and to the forests of Siberia. The factories and dams are impressive. Samarkand and Baku and Alma Ata offer a different kind of beauty, lovely architecture and lovely, friendly people.

For opera and theatre, by all means visit Leningrad during the "White Nights" (24 hours of daylight) celebration. All the great artists gather in Leningrad for a two-week celebration. Tickets for the opera and ballet are low in cost, but the Russian response to artists is one of the most heart-warming experiences you can witness. I have seen grand pianos so loaded with flowers and notes of appreciation that I thought surely the instrument would collapse. This is true all over the Soviet Union. You can attend a gypsy concert in Gorky Park, sitting under the stars on a pleasant evening to hear and watch a fine program of song and dance.

Then there is always the circus. The Russian circus is the only one I ever saw where a trained baby hippopotamus makes the entire circuit of the tent to gaze up at everyone with sad eyes.

I could go on and on about the possibilities a visit to the Soviet Union offers, about how Leningrad is my favorite city in the whole world; how the Russians are constantly refurbishing their tsarist treasures; how there is a magnificent diamond collection in the Kremlin basement; or how Kiev has done so much with the city environs in the past five years; about how impressive and sentimental a visit to Volgagrad (Stalingrad) can be; and how interesting it is to watch the Young Pioneers stand guard at all the monuments to the Great Patriotic War (as the Soviet Union calls World War II), or how after seven trips to the Soviet Union, I still want to do and see many things. Go and see for yourself; but go to see and take part in a different culture, unlike that of home.

WHAT DO FUTURE BRIDES THINK ABOUT DIVORCE?

Divorce represents a serious social problem in the Soviet Union.

S. I. Kulaeva, who heads the Vital Statistics Section of Executive Committee the Moscow City Soviet, thinks that the rising number of divorces, especially among couples under 30 years of age, is caused by a lack of real respect for the institution of the family, and also by the inability to deal with difficult situations. In the city of Moscow during the period 1973-1983, more than a third of the couples who were divorcing had been together less than five years. This age group also accounted for 38% of all divorces. One way of dealing with the problem has been to set up lectures and counselling services at the Palaces of Culture, where weddings and Silver and Golden Anniversaries are held. Commissions on Family Law, composed of the head of the Vital Statistics Bureau, a psychiatrist, a legal specialist, and (in a number of districts) the head of the volunteer section on questions of the family and marriage have succeeded in reconciling 12-14% of the couples suing for divorce. Kulaeva notes that efforts to stabilize the family were rewarded by an increase in the number of births (by 11% compared to 1980) and a halt in the rising divorce rate in the last three years.

In 1984, N.G. Aristova questioned 185 young women, who had never been married, students at two trade-technical schools in Moscow preparing to become typists, stenographers and sewing-machine operators on their attitudes towards divorce. The study also focussed on the influence of family background on the respondents' views of divorce. The following table shows how these young women answered the question, "What would cause you to divorce?":

Different Reasons	%
Drunkeness	48.0
Infidelity	30.5
Incompatibility	27.1
Bad treatment of wife and children	19.8

(Each respondent could note several reasons.)

Girls were chosen for the study because sociological data shows that the woman has more influence than the man in determining the size and structure of the family and the pattern of behavior in it. The girls placed very high value on love for children, common views, material well-being, mutual support and concern, and an equitable distribution of household chores, with a lesser emphasis on spousal obligations and sexual harmony. Although these results correspond to data collected by other Soviet researchers, they do suggest that the girls' high expectations clash with reality in the long run, since Kulaeva reports that almost 70% of the divorces were caused by drunkenness, fights and lack of understanding, although formally 47.7% of divorce cases named incompatibility.

Respondents were asked "How difficult would it be for you to decide to get a divorce for some reason that was important to you?" The answers were ranged on a five-point scale from "quite easy," to "insurmountably difficult." 56.7% of those questioned anticipated that they would have great difficulty in deciding to divorce. The answers of 11.7% showed that they placed a low value on the first marriage, while 31.6% gave indefinite answers. The results show that preparedness for divorce is greater among girls whose parents are living together at the time of the survey. This is a statistically reliable result [perhaps suggesting that the girls in this group were able to observe conflict resolution in the family or the lack of it first-hand].

10.2% of the respondents consider divorce permissible at any stage of the development of the family. 0.5% consider it impermissible under any circumstances, while a majority (70.3%) consider it most permissible in young families with no children. Girls from broken homes attributed particular importance to the presence of children in the family in deciding whether divorce was permissible. "Divorce has become, in mass consciousness, a highly probable stage in the life cycle of the family -- an ordinary phenomenon, if not an everyday one."

A table correlates the degree of difficulty anticipated in deciding on divorce with the underlying reasons for the divorce. These reasons are divided into those deriving from "family values" (the happiness of children, another happy marriage, etc.) and those deriving from non-family values (a free life, independence, etc.). The results show that on the whole women who anticipate acting from non-family motives will have much less difficulty in deciding on divorce.

"Girls from broken homes or from families with experience of divorce acquire the family role more poorly than others, and for them the dissolution of the marriage often appears (from the example of their parents) as a possible solution to a role conflict."

[The phrase which we rendered as "volunteer section" is literally something like "social section." The force of this is that what this body does is done by the citizens directly, rather than by the government, acting through political agencies. The people who do this work are not paid for doing it. However, it is expected of them by virtue of their positions.]

N.G. Aristova, "Chto dumaiut o razvodakh budushchie nevesty?" Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia 1985. No. 2, pp. 111-114.

S.I. Kulaeva, "Problema sokhraneniia konfliktnogo braka: kak ee reshat'?," ibid., 1985, No. 2, pp. 114-116.

* * *

"America must know the peoples of the Soviet Union -- their hopes, their fears, and the facts of their lives."

-- President Ronald Reagan, November 21, 1985

LOVE AND THE JUDGES

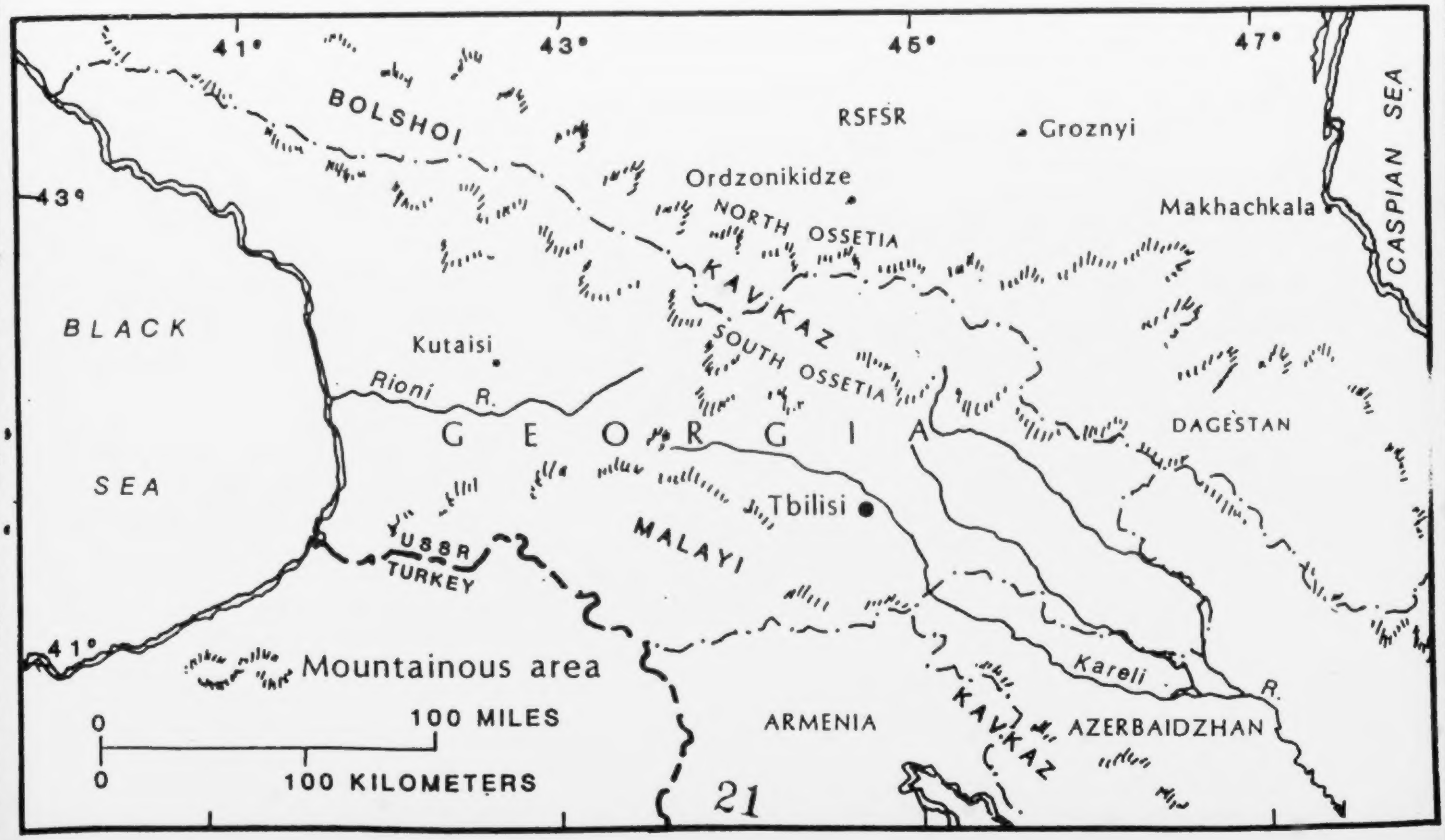
This story, published in Izvestiia (24/VIII/85: 3), illustrates both that the course of true love never runs smooth, and that what Moscow wants, Moscow doesn't always get. A young man named Akhmed met a girl named Asiia in 1979 in a village in Dagestan [on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, remote, mountainous, and ethnically mixed], at a party given on the occasion of another young man's induction into the army. [Such parties are fairly standard practice in the Soviet Union, because they function as a kind of coming-of-age celebration for young men, a Soviet substitute, in this instance, for a traditional peasant ceremony.] Then Akhmed himself was inducted into the army and Asiia said she would wait for him, which she did. They met frequently after that, but Asiia's sisters were far from pleased at this suitor, taking every opportunity to mention trouble in Akhmed's family. In addition, he came from a poor family. Asiia's father put his foot down and declared that there would be no wedding.

Since Asiia and Akhmed were sure that they couldn't live without each other, they decided to do what many other young couples before them have done -- to elope. In Dagestan, this is called "stealing the bride." [Historically, this was sometimes a real abduction, but more frequently it was done by arrangement between the parties to the wedding in order to avoid or to reduce expenses.] Akhmed got his buddies to come get Asiia in a procession of Zhigulis [popular Soviet cars] and take her to the neighboring village where Akhmed had relatives. As a sign that she had been "stolen," Asiia threw down her purse.... That evening, accompanied by the assistant procurator [equivalent to a U.S. Attorney for a given district] of the raion [district], and a policeman, Asiia's relatives burst into the house where the young couple were staying, screaming that she had been dishonored, and dragged her back home. After ten days of considerable pressure from her mother and her sisters, Asiia signed a declaration that Akhmed had forced her. Immediately three investigators from the Procurator's Office of the Dagestan ASSR showed up in the village and questioned eyewitnesses, who subsequently changed their testimony; even so, Akhmed is sentenced to six years in prison, and his friends to lesser terms. The owner of the Zhiguli, however, was not sentenced, in return for his testimony that Asiia had not wanted to sit in the car. Six weeks after the trial, Asiia left her parents' home, moved in with Akhmed's mother, and began petitioning for a reversal of Akhmed's sentence, on the grounds that she had been coerced into signing the statement against him. The Procurator's Office denied the appeal, saying that Asiia was a victim and Akhmed was a cynical hoodlum. A certificate of marriage from the rural soviet was no proof.

Because the reporter had twice written in the youth newspaper about this case, the Procurator's Office of the RSFSR reviewed the evidence, and found it insufficient. After a protest from the Procurator's Office of the RSFSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Dagestan ASSR cancelled Akhmed's sentence (he had already served most of a year) and sent the case back for review, to the very man who had started the whole process. [A protest from a higher court means an order for new proceedings, in accordance with the higher court's decision.] The assistant procurator told the reporter that he had no doubt at all of Akhmed's guilt, and that he considered the newspaper's interference "unnecessary and biased." A second trial on December 17, 1984 ended with the judge's decision that there had been no crime, and that Akhmed's friends were to be exonerated. After that, Asiia and Akhmed celebrated their wedding [the fact that a young couple has a marriage certificate does not, by custom, complete the wedding cycle (for a description of a wedding ceremony in a neighboring district at an earlier point in time, see Smirnova 1974)]. However, the assistant procurator of the raion filed a legal appeal for yet another trial, which was granted by the Supreme Court of the Dagestan ASSR. Once again the case went to the Supreme Court of the RSFSR, which filed a protest. A. Omarov, the chairman of the Supreme Court of Dagestan, told the newspaper: "By a resolution of the Supreme Court of Dagestan, dated 16 May 1985, the protest of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR is not granted. The case is turned over to a new judge for speedy review, and the matter is being monitored." In the meantime, Akhmed has taken Asiia to the Tiumen oil fields, where he works as part of a Komsomol construction team. Asiia is pregnant, and fearful that any day her husband will be snatched from her.

The reporter asks why it is necessary to break up this young family, and calls for the correct Party approach, which would seem to be to leave the couple alone. The case is curious for what is not reported: Akhmed may have been sentenced according to laws designed to punish cases of "theft of the bride," which are usually accompanied by demands for bride-price and refusal to pay it. Over the years, Soviet newspapers have denounced "bride-theft" and bride-price as demeaning to women, and as a survival of customs inappropriate for Soviet citizens who must consciously build new lives for themselves. It is clear, however, that in some cases -- and this appears to be one of them -- bride-theft is used as a mechanism of escape from parental authority. Asiia's father is, in this account, a rather ominous and shadowy figure. This is the kind of story to which a sequel can be expected. When and if it appears, we will publish it in The Station Relay.

Ia.S. Smirnova, "New Features of the Adygei Wedding Ritual," in Stephen P. Dunn and Ethel Dunn, editors, Introduction to Soviet Ethnography, Berkeley: Highgate Road Social Science Research Station, 1974, Vol. I, pp. 291-307.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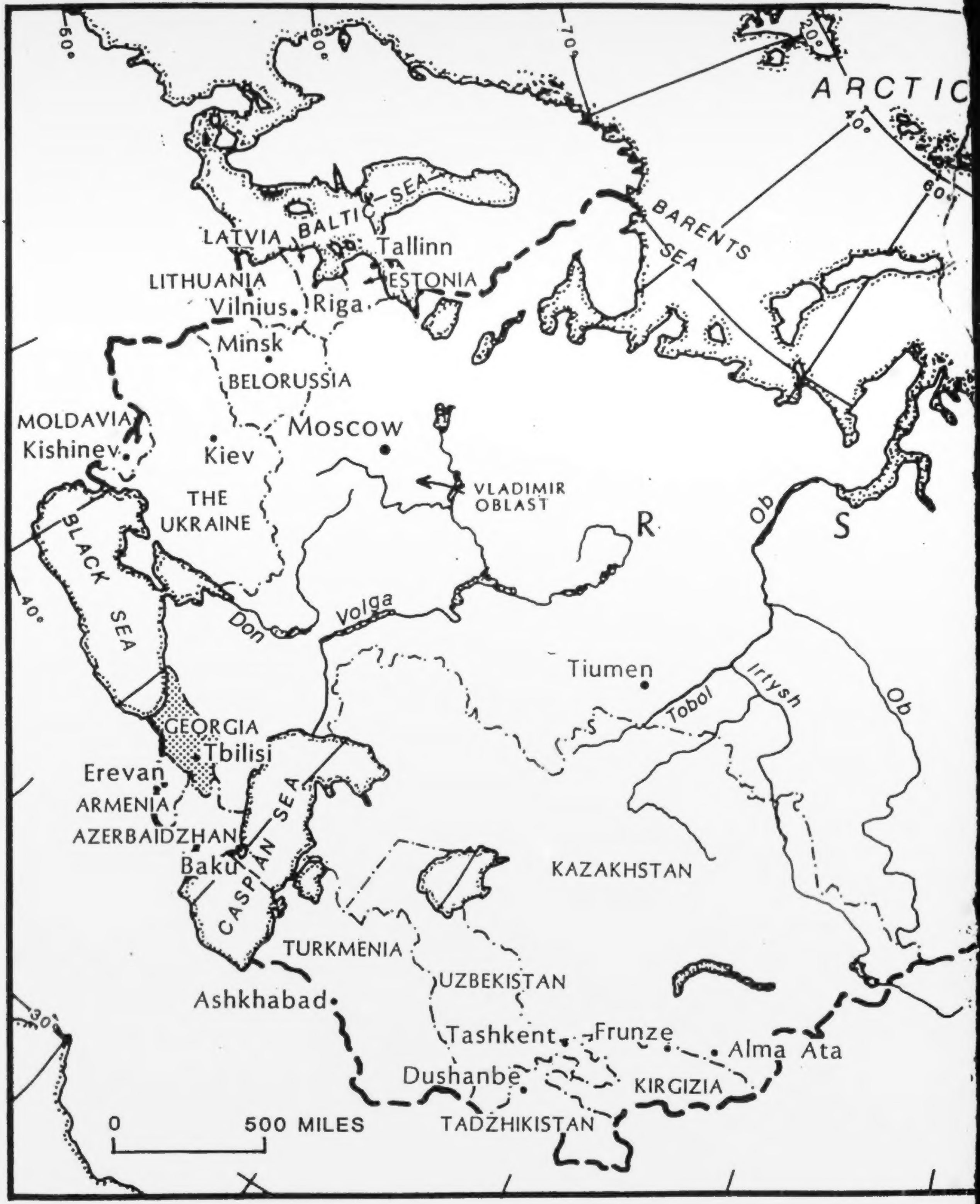
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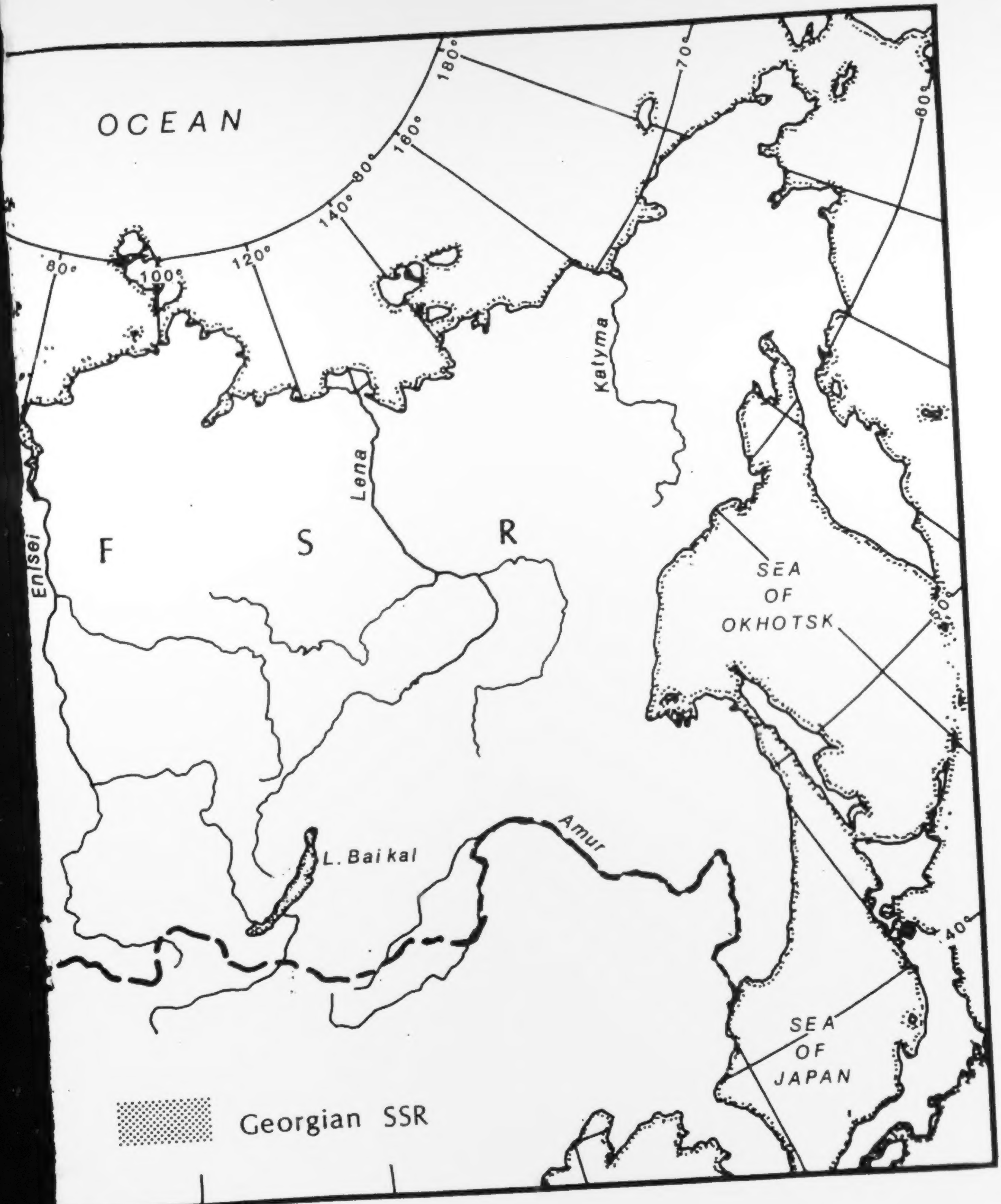
See map insert, page 7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THE VILLAGE OF RECHNOE

This sketch of a Russian village was published in one of the major literary-political journals in the Soviet Union. The author apparently grew up in the village, and this seems to be one of his first publications.

The name Rechnoe means, approximately, Riverville. The village is on the Kama River in the northeastern part of the European USSR, either in the Tatar ASSR or very close to it. The population is Russian.

The river at this point is eight kilometers wide. In the summer, the water is low and the river is clogged with weeds and reeds. There are no fish in evidence and no frogs, but there are big chains of barges pushed by powerful tugs and there are large cruise ships with four decks and motor launches. It's not unusual to see 10-15 ships on a 25-kilometer stretch of river between two bends.

There are no amateur folk-dancing or singing groups in Rechnoe, but there are portable radios and tape recorders. The voices of pop singers including The Beatles come out of the windows of certain houses at night: The Beatles apparently take second place after Alla Pugacheva, an enormously popular Soviet pop vocalist. Perhaps what seems to be The Beatles, isn't The Beatles at all, but since people can't understand foreign lyrics, and since recordings aren't of very high quality, "all this howling goes by the name of 'Bitly'." One evening a particularly loud song in an unknown language came out of the club house, upsetting the sheep and goats in the neighboring yard terribly. The next morning the author asked the club supervisors what was going on. They told him, "Don't tell anyone, but we had a disco. I asked the kids whether we should turn the lights on but they said no. And in the darkness everyone did what he wanted."

The author asked the kolkhoz chairman how many of the school graduates were staying in the village and he said two, one boy and one girl. The others were all going on to the specialized secondary school or to the secondary school in the raion center, or to the city to stay with relatives; the next fall, only five children are entering the first class. The foundation has been laid for a new school with a capacity of 190 students. The kolkhoz needs a school one-third the size, but they're building what the standard plan calls for. Graduation night is celebrated with various hit tunes from Pugacheva's records, sung either a cappella or with guitar. There are separate dinners for the graduates and for their parents and the teachers. After the toasts the ladies sang songs, which appear to be the Russian equivalent of country-and-Western.

During the summer some former residents visited the village. After a buffet in one of the houses, the people went out in the street and sang. The song was an old one -- apparently a folk song or 19th century romantic ballad. When the song was finished, one old lady in one of the neighboring houses asked that it be repeated because she was bored by the silence.

"As for the extremes in the culture of the village: at one pole there is the disco and at the other pole, the chief thing is to fill your belly. In my view, the two things are connected." The author complains bitterly about the quality of Soviet popular music and the debasement of the folk tradition. "We have to believe that a fundamental break is taking place, and that the difficulties in the supply of foodstuffs to the population will be overcome. But we can't seriously maintain that we will take care of culture in the countryside after the Foodstuffs Program [a set of measures to increase the amount and variety of food available and to improve the use of food] has been implemented, or as is sometimes said, after 'the standard of living has been raised.' This formulation is usually taken to mean an increase in the income of the population and in the supply of consumer goods.

But can we really confine ourselves to this interpretation?"

The cultural level, judging by statistics, is fairly high. Alekseevskii Raion, where the village of Rechnoe is, has almost 100 cultural institutions: 21 rural houses of culture, 30 village clubhouses and 32 libraries, plus the raion house of culture and two mobile clubhouses. There are 140 culture specialists, which is a considerable number for 22 kolkhozy and sovkhozy. In a year's time there are 979 theme evenings, 2329 lectures and 915 concerts and showings of films. These measures have a total audience of almost 632,000 people, and if you divide this by the number of inhabitants in the raion you come out with about 23 "cultural contacts" for each inhabitant.

Rechnoe village does have a clubhouse -- one-storey, brick, with a hot water heater. There's a pretty good library, films twice a week, dances twice a week, an amateur concert at New Year's, with a costume ball. The main attraction at the New Year's holiday is the concert by Iura Sivakov, a local boy, unmarried, of no definite profession, but with some musical talent and a pretty good voice. Sivakov came and read the author his poems which, although not publishable, were quite good enough for an amateur evening. The author liked him because he didn't drink and didn't care about designer jeans. The clubhouse is frequented solely by young people. The film showing that the author attended was a "Moldavian Western" about bandits. The film was very old and kept breaking and the sound kept going out. At one time when the film broke, a scene got left out and everyone howled and whistled because having seen the film several times, they knew something was wrong. The receipts from the film showing are between one and ten rubles, usually three or four, and ten more rarely, when they are sent an Indian film. When the author tried to talk to the local authorities about shortages of spare parts for projectors, he was told that things were no better in other villages. At least in Rechnoe there is a competent full-time projectionist who has his own car and brings the films personally from the depository. [This is a fairly common situation, but many villages do not have a full-time worker to do this job -- particularly with his own car.] The club library is run by the wife of one of the equipment operators -- a conscientious and hard-working woman and a good housekeeper. "I noticed that the local people liked to read thick books with hard covers and pictures and they don't care for paperbacks, particularly those with small print. In general there are very few readers in Rechnoe, particularly among the younger generation. . . . The coefficient of useful activity of this focus of culture [here the author is being slightly sarcastic about the library] is very small."

The author describes the wedding of his second cousin in Rechnoe to a boy from the neighboring town of Chistopol', at which the local women sang a traditional wedding lament, which sounded so strange that at first he didn't realize what it was; the bride was also taken by surprise. He thinks that a fully traditional wedding could still be held in Rechnoe, and he seems to think that this should be done in preference to the "Bitly." [At weddings before the Revolution, the bride often sang a lament in which she bade farewell to her carefree single life, and complained of the treatment she expected from her husband. Naturally, these laments have gone out of style, but old women still sometimes sing them, as happened here.]

The boys are not returning to the village after army service, and since there are no boys, the girls also leave. Therefore there are no weddings, and also no children. In one year three boys who had returned to their father's house applied one after the other to leave the village. One took a job with the police, one married a science-teacher in the local school who finished her term of service after graduation and took her husband home with her, and the third went away for training after serving in the construction brigade. In none of these instances could the Chairman do anything. [Apparently, the Chairman's permission is still necessary for leaving the kolkhoz even though the people now have passports.] The third fellow came to the Chairman for a recommendation for a job outside the kolkhoz. The Chairman didn't give it, but he left anyway.

The equipment-operator Anatolii Ivanovich Chuparinov has a stone house, facing south, with a zinc-plated iron roof. He has a large front yard and a brick garage for a Zhiguli and a motorcycle. His farm includes a cow, a calf, a pig, sheep, chickens, bees, and some big white ducks about the size of geese. Anatolii was born, though he doesn't want to remember it, on June 22, 1941. That's the very day of the German invasion. He's married, with two children. His daughter has just gone into the 8th class and the son into the Army. The son writes that after the Army he'll come back to the kolkhoz and be a carpenter. The daughter plans to be trained as a paramedic and also come back to the village. The Chuperinovs produce honey for their own use, but lately the yield hasn't been good because of the weather. On the other hand, their neighbor fed his bees almost a whole bag of granulated sugar and sold the honey for 1,000 rubles, making a 100% profit. The kolkhoz sells grain to all the workers and retired people; in addition, whoever wants can buy baked bread either in the raion center or in the nearby city of Chistopol'. Each family feeds more than three lumps of bread a day [up to half a loaf each] to the livestock. In short, the village has plenty to eat and sells vegetables, eggs and milk on the market. The local store sells early cabbage and fresh vegetables from the farm attached to the Kama auto plant. The author doesn't know what to make of this because the auto plant is 200 kilometers away. It turns out that the city is providing the countryside with food, and the author finds this a bit ridiculous.

This is a very properous village with some strange consumer habits. The people buy sugar by the sack in order to make jam and canned fruit and compotes. They also used a lot of sugar to make braga, both for their own consumption and as payment for various kinds of services which are beyond the power of the old people who are compelled to hire someone to fix the roof or to put up a fence. The supply of fruit varies from year to year and there should be a steady supply which is assured by preserving. Therefore there is some competition in the use of sugar between braga and other purposes. "Two three-quarter-liter jars of braga are equivalent in 'killing power' to almost a bottle of vodka, and braga doesn't need anything to eat with it because it's already sweet. Therefore it erases the distinction between a drink and a snack." In some families, particularly among old people, sugar is used in frightening quantities. The old widower Feodor puts it in his shchi and soup because he is sure that it makes his bones stronger. The elderly woman Vasilisa Volkova feeds it to her billygoat, Vanya, who beats all the billygoats in the village. The author tried to convince the people that too much sugar was bad for them, but he was defeated on this point. No one would believe that something which was unhealthful would be sold in unlimited quantities to whoever wanted it. "It remained for me to do a sociological study to find out what besides sugar is eaten by a family consisting of two elderly villagers -- the same one where the wife makes 100 three-liter jars of preserves in a year. In the most general terms, my study shows that in a year's time this family ate one yearling bull, a piglet, two sheep and one-and-one-half dozen chickens. Bread, potatoes, and everything else they didn't count. I then asked at the library and the post office what they subscribe to and what they read in this family. The answers were the same, they read nothing and they subscribed to nothing. They have no television or radio receiver."

The author illustrates his point about the obsession with food and drink and the rather slovenly moral climate by citing the case of one fisherman who drinks because he doesn't know what else to do with the proceeds of his stolen fish. His machinations are well known in the village in Kazan, and the RSFSR Ministry of Fishing, but almost nothing changes. More precisely, the thief is driven out and even sometimes sentenced to jail but always turns up again and is rehired. It's considered a big deal to interfere with the fishing bureaucracy. "The disintegrating influence of unpunished major theft of the people's goods on the moral microclimate of the village can't be overestimated. Whose children are wearing gold rings and earrings? The fisherman's children. . . . A husband and wife -- teachers at the music school -- have been building a stone mansion for the state fisherman on private contract for two years. I asked these amateur stonemasons what compelled them to hire themselves out to this nouveau-riche type as builders. I was told that they wanted to buy a car and that the husband, now a teacher of the accordion, had previously been a stonemason. Who has a new green scooter with a carrying basket, nicknamed 'Muravei,' of the type sold only to organizations? The state fisherman. On this scooter on the way home he grabs a big armful of hay or a basket of unshelled peas out of the stack. Apparently a small thing, but it will feed the cow for a day, and what she doesn't eat gets dried for winter." The fishermen exchange fish directly for beer and drink it as they are going away in their speedboat, throwing the bottles into the river because the store doesn't take glass containers. Two years ago, the sale of vodka in the village store in Rechnoe was stopped; it is now sold only in the village of Lebiazhe, seven kilometers away. For the villagers who have modern equipment, this is no distance at all. Vodka is fetched on motorcycles and scooters, in cars and tractors, on bikes, or, in extreme cases, on horseback. Trips taken while drunk often end badly. The author thinks that the cause of drunkenness is idleness and easy prosperity, often obtained through theft. He doesn't know what should be done and is sure only that people can't be forced to become cultured and that drunkenness is a social disease, not biological or hereditary.

The author cites a case which illustrates the prosperity and standing available to competent people in the village. Alexander Samoilov, the assistant to the kolkhoz blacksmith, is a member of the Communist Party and its local (raion) committee, and also a deputy to the Raion Soviet. He's a little over 40, with a wife and two children. Two years ago he was a welder, but had to change his profession for reasons of health. His son holds a kolkhoz scholarship to the Chistopol' Agricultural Tekhnikum and his daughter is still in the local school. His house has all the conveniences which he has himself put in, including a hot-water system, and the yard has metal barrels which hold all the rainwater that comes off the roof. This water is led to the garden and the orchard by a pipe which is insulated and doesn't freeze in winter. The house has a concrete basement which is well supplied with canned vegetables, preserves, potatoes, etc. The orchard and garden have several varieties of apples, berries, cucumbers, carrots, onions, and dill. The cabbages are eight kilograms each and the potatoes are enough to last until the new crop. Samoilov doesn't neglect his work in the kolkhoz either, and he does welding at harvest time even though he's been forbidden by the doctors.

What big things happen in the village? There are few believers in the village; most of them are old women. Their influence seems significant but really is not. Each infant born in the village is baptized: that's what the public opinion of old women demands. On major holidays -- Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, St. Nicholas, Troitsa and the Virgin of Kazan -- no work is actually done in the kolkhoz except for the most immediately necessary tasks. On holidays it's not considered reprehensible to drink a good deal. The author asked many people to explain the reason for these holidays but none of them could. At best, the answer was: we didn't invent it, it's always been that way. An observer might think that such holidays were merely an excuse for drinking, but that would be a shaky proposition, because the villagers drink all the time. The author considers it only an expression of the social solidarity characteristic of rural people, but there is someone in the village, despite the fact that there are no believers in the middle and younger generations, whose opinions have to be taken into account. There's no church and therefore no priest but there is Vasilissa Volkova, and she is considered the expert in religion. She's over 60, widowed, and with a son living somewhere in Perm Oblast. She doesn't get a pension because she wasn't a member of the kolkhoz; she returned to the village in the early 1960s from some unknown place [prison? the camps?]. She has a Psalter, a Bible and some other religious texts [which are generally rare]. She has no education, either special or general, but she is a sensible person and has some eloquence and presence of mind. She's given gifts of money and food in return for praying for the dead, and she has some elderly women assistants to carry out the necessary rites, read the Psalter, put on memorial services, which are usually accompanied by a meal, and accompany her when she sings the songs. Her house is clean and inviting. In the front room there's a large icon-case with a huge image of Christ which she took from a half-demolished church. There is an icon lamp burning before it. In the kitchen corner there is a big crucifix, also from the church. The image on the crucifix is of cast iron made in the Urals and looks like a Negro. [Russia has some famous black icons, including the Virgin of Kazan, but the reason for this phenomenon is obscure.] Vasilissa's icon is wrapped in a waffle-weave towel to cover its nakedness.

People are a little afraid of Vasilissa. They still remember the time when she was asked to come and perform a service for the mother-in-law of Valentin Soloviev [the state fisherman mentioned above], who had suddenly died. Vasilissa said quietly but firmly that she wouldn't and that Valentin knew why; people remembered that a couple years before he had made mean remarks about her and her assistants. Valentin had to go to the village of Sakony some distance away to find another old lady to perform the service. He told the author all about it and said some more things about Vasilissa, but this time in a rather tentative way. The village immediately knew what had happened. Some people were on Valentin's side, some on Vasilissa's and some on neither, but to everyone it seemed a little ridiculous to go to the Party organizer or the kolkhoz Chairman to complain about a fractious old woman. The author was still fishing when Valentin came back on his motor boat with an old lady sitting on the bow, all in black like a crow.

The author suggests, only half jokingly, that a body of unofficial clergy be prepared for the village. "The time will pass, the old religious enthusiasts will pass away, and the young people don't need this at all. One can think that way, but one can also (and should) think another way.

"It's true that the young people in the village are growing up as atheists, believing neither in God nor in the devil. But the spiritual sphere inevitably has to be filled. One of the things which fill it is culture, including rural culture. Does this in fact correspond at the present stage to the demands made on it?" [The author obviously thinks not. He is also far less hostile to religion than most Soviet writers in major publications. In response to a challenge from one of our correspondents, we will be dealing with the atheism of the Soviet state in the next issue.]

The author seems to excuse himself for painting an unattractive picture of the village in certain respects. Things aren't really at all bad and the new Party organizer knows what he's doing. The Party organizer thinks that there should be a Komsomol branch that the raion Komsomol should be compelled to look into the village more frequently, and that a competent person has to be found to run the clubhouse. The author suggested that Iura Sivakov should be sent to the city to be trained for this work. ". . . there can be no culture apart from national culture and the culture of the people. He [the Party organizer] recalled how the previous summer an artist with good recommendations turned up in the village. He was interested in icons and he told the old ladies that he was collecting them for a newly-opened church near Perm. The old ladies didn't give him anything, and then he stole one from one of them when she wasn't looking. The police had to be called to catch the 'artist.'" [The traffic in stolen icons is considered a serious problem by the Soviet authorities, who consider icons part of the state's artistic patrimony, however hostile they may be to religion as such. There may also be something else happening here. The author seems to be paying a compliment to the old ladies, who were perceptive enough to know that the visiting artist was up to no good, and respected the icons enough not to part with them lightly.]

Viktor Il'in, "Selo moe Rechnoe," Novyi Mir 1984. No.3, pp. 191-207. Il'in's sketch will be translated in full in a forthcoming issue of Soviet Sociology, edited by Stephen P. Dunn.

GLOSSARY

Braga -- home-made fruit wine, quite strong.

Raion -- an administrative subdivision, either of a city or of a region (Oblast).

Shchi -- salted cabbage soup, with or without meat. In the Russian peasant cuisine, however, shchi ranks as solid food.

Tekhnikum -- specialized secondary school.

Young Pioneers -- an organization for children between the ages of approximately 8 and 16, similar to the Boy and Girl Scouts, except that almost all children of the appropriate age belong.

Zhiguli -- a popular small Soviet car, like a Volkswagen or a Fiat.

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The Station logo, at left, is one version of the ancient Slavic Tree of Life

The Station Relay

Facts and views on daily life in the Soviet Union

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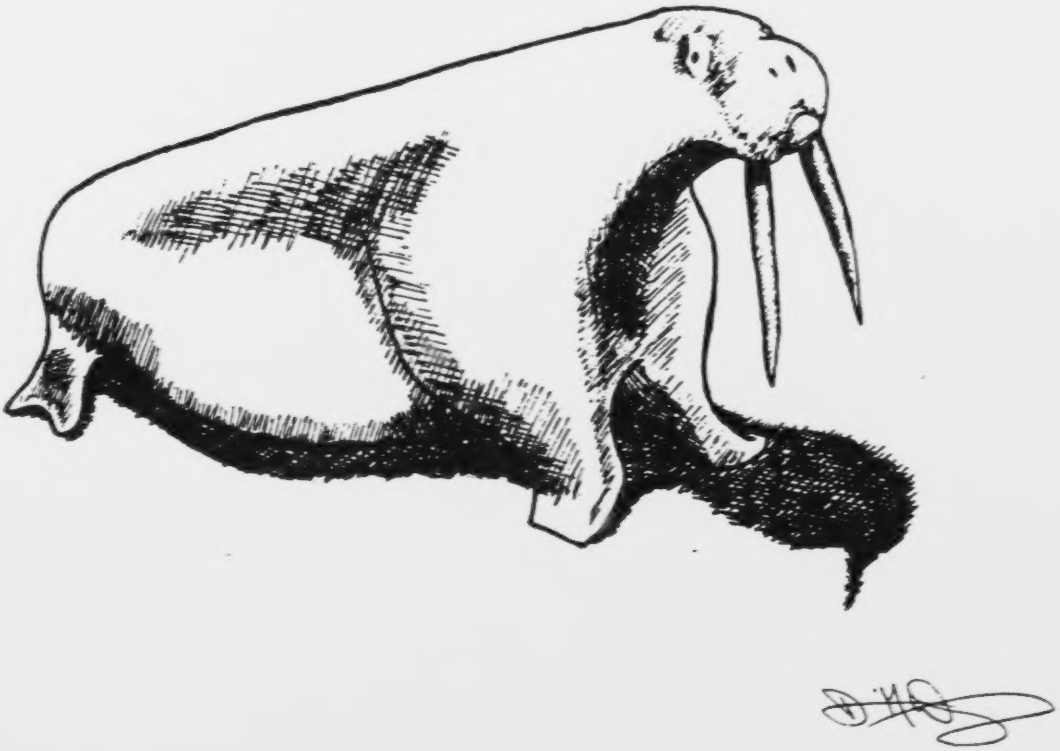
The Station Relay

Facts and views on daily life in the Soviet Union
Volume 1, No. 3 January, 1986



This pensive walrus (drawn by Dianna Deikman) is a representation of a walrus-ivory carving given to Ethel Dunn by a Soviet ethnographer who has done field work among the peoples of the Soviet Far East; she found him in a native workshop. The dancing bear on the cover of No. 2 was drawn by Cindi Ziontz, a senior at the Rhode Island School of Design. Any of our readers who have ideas for other covers are invited to communicate with us.

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GLOSSARY

Oblast —	The largest political and administrative subdivision, usually centered around a large city.
Okrug —	An official administrative division in areas inhabited by non-Russians.
Samovar —	device for heating water to brew tea, consisting of a large urn with a pipe down the middle which holds burning charcoal. The tea pot itself sits on top of the pipe.
Sovkhoz —	A state owned agricultural organization whose work force consists of "workers" (*rabochie*) rather than "peasants" (*krestiane*) or "collective farmers" (*kolkhozniki*).

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors

[*The Station Relay* has received two letters declining membership in the work of Highgate Road Social Science Research Station and a subscription to *The Station Relay*. Both letters said that we were printing "anti-Soviet trash." One person was kind enough to respond to Ethel Dunn as a colleague, but we are assuming that he prefers to remain anonymous, although he gave his permission to us to share his remarks with our readers.]

Dear Editors:

As a self-conscious immigrant who has made a professional study of the cultural differences and the obstacles to cross-cultural understanding, I have come to the point of despair: there is no way of getting across, to the other side. You and I agree that it is necessary to get across, if there is to be a chance for peace or even human survival. But how? In my professional work -- and in my teaching -- I have tried to explain Soviet policy and behavior as a rational and understandable response to conditions utterly alien (or even incomprehensible) to Americans. I go to some lengths in trying to explain these circumstances and then ask: how would Americans have acted (or act) if they were caught in the same circumstances? In other words, I try to put myself on the other side, assuming that there are good reasons for what is done by the Politburo or the KGB.

To give you a concrete example relating to your article "Do People in the Soviet Union Believe in God?" In your place I would have tried to explain why the Communist Party propagates atheism.... I confess that Soviet atheism does not shock me. As a Quaker I go to a silent Meeting for Worship; words don't count, theology does not count -- and the spirit is free. And as a pacifist I believe that there is no need to quarrel about words. Anyway, I can sympathize with Lenin's atheism (or Marx's): the Eastern Orthodox priests that I have seen have always frightened me by their uptight dogmatism; religion in the Russian and Soviet context is not what it is in the American context.

I suppose the reason why my comment on your publication was so negative was that I felt you were not crossing the cultural gap between the two countries; you stayed too far on the American side. I sympathize with your efforts to help American travellers in the Soviet Union to understand the difficulties under which

Soviet citizens labor. But will this insight not conform to traditional American convictions that the Soviet system is evil? The insight which I try to get across (very unsuccessfully) is that the Soviet government -- or any government in that part of the world -- is faced with immense difficulties not of its own making (many of these difficulties are now deliberately made by the US government). We need to understand these difficulties before we judge. For the sake of peace we need to understand those difficulties, even for the sake of a proper social science that can argue that it understands what it talks about (and in the case of Soviet studies -- and much else in the world, I believe that our social sciences resemble social alchemy rather than social science).

I am fully aware that my line of argument is likely to be considered pro-Soviet, given the prevailing climate of opinion. And I confess that from my own acquaintance with Soviet realities I have a certain sympathy for their predicament. Yet as Goethe said, without sympathy -- or love -- you can't understand anything. ... As a pragmatist I ... argue that if we don't understand reality, we have no chance of controlling it. And these days it is highly important that we can have some sense of control over our destiny; or else. So I stand for my American patriotism: understanding why the Soviets behave like the Soviets -- atheism and all -- is in our best national interest; it contributes to our national security, by giving us a better sense of control over the realities we face.

I admit, however, that any explanation of why the Soviets behave like Soviets gets you into highly complex theories about the comparative study of cultures or countries. I say to my students that we are caught in what I call "cognitive imperialism;" we cannot escape explaining the non-American world in American terms (as nations of alien realities can't escape being caught in their own cultural perceptions). All explanations of alien realities are false; they do not explain reality as the insiders see it. The fact is that we have no other cognitive tools except those produced by own our limited cultural experience; all our perceptions of alien cultures are misperceptions, the source of infinite hostility that may cost us our lives.

* * *

From the Editors:

Dear Readers:

You may remember that in Issue No. 2, we quoted President Reagan: "America must know the peoples of the Soviet Union -- their hopes, their fears, and the facts of their lives." The question indeed is how to accomplish this shared aim.

We contend that our free institutions don't benefit the ordinary American in learning about the Soviet Union. We would go even further: the American establishment doesn't need centralized censorship of the usual kind in order to produce in the mass of the American public a profound ignorance of Soviet reality and culture, an intellectual vacuum which can then be filled with the crudest stereotypes, even without the kind of elaborate, coordinated propaganda which the Soviet media are always carrying on. In the American context, market forces by themselves do an excellent job bringing about this result.

Our colleague's despair expressed in **Letters to the Editors** in this issue is something we can all sympathize with, but must never give in to. On November 10th, 1985, Serge Schmemann, Moscow Bureau Chief of the New York Times, wrote an article "The View from Russia" in the New York Times Magazine about Soviet citizens' perception of the United States. He stresses the degree to which these perceptions are determined by official ideology and particularly by exposure to the "literature made available in the Soviet Union [which is] carefully selected to give an ideologically correct image of America or at least one that does not contradict the Kremlin's official line." Schmemann's article, while interesting and useful within limits, is more remarkable for what it doesn't say than for what it does. It overlooks the (to our mind) undeniable fact that the ordinary Soviet citizen has far more access to American literature, both in translation and in the original, than the ordinary American does to Soviet literature (which, of course, doesn't include the nineteenth century Russian classics Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, and in part Maxim Gorky). Schmemann mentions this fact only as something asserted by Soviet spokesmen, which, by implication, the reader is free not to believe.

Robert V. Allen reported in the letters column of New York Times Magazine of December 15, 1985, that he has compiled a bibliography of "some 3500 entries showing, for example, that the Russians knew not only James Fenimore Cooper, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain, but also such obscure writers as Josiah G. Holland, Etta W. Pierce or John Haberton." Mr. Allen goes on to say that before the first World War, Russians were intensely interested in the achievements of American commerce and industry. "Though it is true that there were relatively few people in the vast and poorly educated Russian Empire who could have really specialized knowledge of this country, there were more of them than one might at first assume, and the breadth of interest was astonishing."

We think that Soviet censorship of foreign literature -- as distinct from actual Soviet propaganda -- doesn't hinder the Soviet citizen in learning about America.

One reader, who did decide to subscribe, thought that our first issue was boring. It may be that he has in mind the short attention span of the young people we are trying to reach. We have to ask our readers' indulgence: the story that we are trying to tell is a long and complicated one, and probably will never be entirely told (remember Scheherezade). We have to say in our own defense that we are also aiming at teachers (and at parents, who are also teachers), whom we expect to be creative, and to remember that every item does tell you what people think, eat, wear, expect, fear, etc.

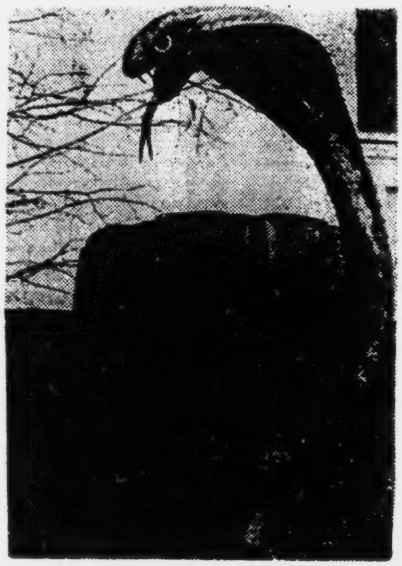
Test yourselves, and if we've failed, let us know!

Sincerely,

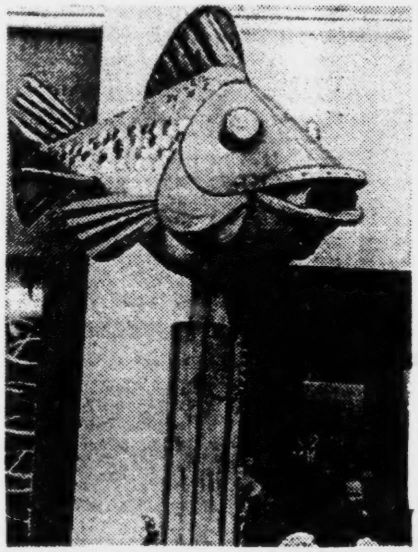
The Editors

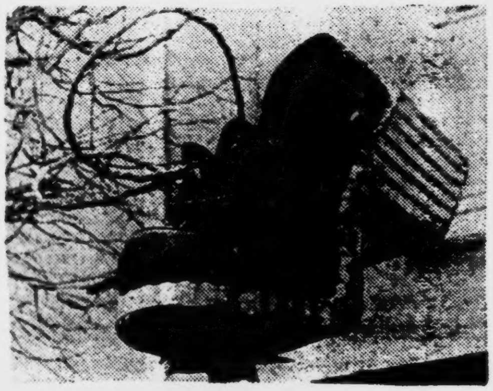
* * *

SOVIET SHOP SIGNS



Many people contend that Soviet cities are drab and gray. This may be true in some cases, but there are exceptions. For instance, along Vil'niaus Street in the Lithuanian city of Shiauliai, the shops are decorated with imaginative and amusing metal sculptures in place of shop signs, and with wall paintings. The street is closed to automobile traffic and equipped with benches. We reproduce here four examples of these signs -- one of them being pointed out by the town artist, V. Puronas. Clearly he is pointing to a savings bank. The other signs advertise a fish shop, a shoe shop, and the marvelously realistic cobra stands guard outside a pharmacy, in memory of the Greek physician Aesculapius.





A. BORODIN, "Progulka po ulitse Vil'niaus" ["A Stroll Down Vil'niaus Street"], Izvestiia, 9/XI/85: 8.

A CRISIS CENTER IN MOSCOW

Moscow City Hospital No. 20 has a crisis center developed by a professor and Doctor of Medical Sciences, Aina Grigor'evna Ambrumova, who works at the All-Union Scientific-Methodological Center for the Study and Prevention of Extreme Conditions. The crisis center is headed by Candidate of Medical Sciences G.A. Skibina, psychiatrists A.B. Ordianskaia, A.M. Ponizovskii and L. I. Korobova; O. R. Arnol'd, a specialist in "self-training" [apparently behavior modification with the aid of role-playing], a senior psychologist, M. Z. Dukarevich, and a psychotherapist, G.V. Starshenbaum.

Both individual and group therapy are practiced here, and, as described, would not be out of place in either Berkeley or New York. Many of the patients are women who have lost their children through accidental death or illness, or have lost their husbands to younger, more attractive women. The reporter witnesses group therapy in which a woman criticizes her ex-husband for loving another woman. The question arises, whose fault is it when love dies? Instead of seeking vengeance, the woman is encouraged to remember that he was not her first love, and when he did appear, she had to tell the first man that their relationship was a mistake for which she should be forgiven. The woman does not like this turn, and seeks support from other women in the group, who point out that her ex-husband pays his alimony, brings presents to the children, and wants to have a say in their upbringing. He suggested that he take part in the upbringing of the children, the woman says, but I won't let him. He turns the children against me. And you don't think you are turning the children against their father, the therapist asks. Under what circumstances can we call a man who leaves his family a scoundrel? Not, the consensus is, if he helps with money and raising the children. Not surprisingly, this frustrates the woman, who cries out, Well, what do you think I ought to do? After a few minutes of silence, another woman begins: I had the same experience, and almost died of grief, but, thank God, I survived....

The Center also does couples therapy, aiding women to see the man's suffering and the man to see things about his wife of which he was unaware. Often the problems of dealing with elderly family members are raised. "We must remember that the problem of loneliness in old age can arise even when elders live in a family."

As an example of the kind of thing that happens in role-playing therapy, two women pretend that they have the same lover. Some women will say, you should leave him to me; I saw him first. Others are more altruistic and will themselves back down. As a hypothetical example of the problem of generational conflict, a 19-year-old girl wants to go south on a vacation with her young man. The parents have very serious arguments against but the daughter considers herself capable of making her own decisions. "If there is no trust in her, it means that the parents have not raised her right."

Since this discussion comes from the leading anti-religious journal in the Soviet Union (Science and Religion), there are a few closing paragraphs about the person who considers that his difficulties are a punishment from God. On the whole, however, this article might have been written by any Westerner interested in psychological problems.

A. Belen'kaia, "Tysiach'iu nitei ty sviazan s mirom," Nauka i religiia, 1985, No. 7, pp. 15-19.

* * *

THE POPULAR SCIENCE LECTURE

[Since we have been challenged to explain why the Communist Party propagates atheism, our attention is always drawn by items which give details about the way in which the ordinary Soviet public is introduced to science, which the journal Science and Religion, at least, always identifies as the other side of the coin. Speaking of coins, notice that the main problem in the following commentary is lack of money. What does this say about how the regime has ordered its priorities?]

In all of the Soviet Union there are probably only about a thousand planetarium lecturers. The profession is difficult both because the lectures have to be delivered in darkness, without any visual aids, and because they have to be varied to suit the needs of each particular audience, and in this sense they are like musical improvisations. The reporter criticizes the practice in Moscow and in several other large planetariums of having lectures read on tape, by actors not specially trained in a scientific sense for this work. The planetarium at the Taganrog Museum where the reporter works is one of the oldest in the country. In December of 1985, it celebrated its 30th anniversary. However, it is now illegally relegated to a crowded and damp basement which is filled with surplus desks, telescopes, slide and movie projectors. The official occupant of the basement is an optical shop for making telescopes. Originally the planetarium was housed in a two-storey auditorium seating 120 persons. The equipment was simple but worked well and the planetarium was well attended. Soon after opening, the museum building was remodeled, the planetarium lost its space, the equipment was put in the basement and then was taken off the list as not being good for anything. This all happened almost twenty years ago. At first the movie theatre of the museum was used for astronomical lectures; then this was converted into a souvenir shop and the planetarium was evicted entirely -- on the basis of an official instruction to the effect that no other organization could be housed (where showings were already being held). For a number of years a hall at the back of the picture gallery was rented for the planetarium, but finally everything was shifted into the basement.

For this reason all lectures are now held elsewhere, even though the planetarium does not have its own transportation. The lecturing staff carries two old movie projectors and one small new one with them. The planetarium is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR and therefore does not have centralized supply as the planetariums of the "Znanie" Society do, and they have a very hard time getting visual aids and other equipment. They use some obsolete materials from the Moscow planetarium and make some of their own slides. They have had no luck in getting the city to build them a permanent building or even a permanent lecture hall in an existing building. There are about 800 lectures a year, which is after all more than two a day, given under very unfavorable conditions.

[The point here is that the "Znanie" Society is a volunteer, non-governmental organization, responsible for a large proportion of the atheistic and scientific lectures given in the USSR. The Society can generate income and therefore is not open to the same competing claims on its resources as the Ministry of Culture.]

T. MOROZOVA, "S tochki zreniia lektora," `"From the Point of View of a Lecturer"', Nauka i religiia, No. 8, 1985, pp. 4-5.

AN INVITATION TO TEA

[Any discussion of the nature of the atheistic Soviet state has to take into account questions about personal relationships, and even the meaning of life. At one time, any citizen who took it upon himself to find solutions to problems that the state was not addressing would have been regarded with extreme suspicion. In the 1960s, for example, a disabled activist and inventor was widely praised in the Soviet press for his attempts to provide other disabled people with work (producing his inventions to make the life of the disabled easier). In the 1970s, he apparently displeased some local residents, and the Minister of Social Security, and was sent 700 miles away to an old-folks home. Times are different now, and the regime has apparently begun to recognize that individual initiative is needed to solve the multitude of problems which still remain on the local level.

[A related issue is the pervasive alcoholism. We can see from "A Crisis Center in Moscow" in this issue, and also from the fact that 48% of prospective brides would divorce because of drunkenness (as reported in Issue No. 2), that the consumption of alcohol affects nearly everyone in the Soviet Union. Il'ia Brandukov, the subject of "An Invitation to Tea," seems to be a member of an artists' colony. He is using a very low-key approach. Whether he is successful, and to what extent, remains to be seen.

The problem which Brandukov faces in regard to the renovation of the disused factory building is the same one with which Alexander Solzhenitsyn dealt in For the Good of the Cause. This well-known novella describes how a school which was built by the efforts of the faculty and students is taken over by another agency for completely unrelated purposes. This frequently happens in the Soviet Union, where different segments of the bureaucracy often represent different constituencies and act at cross-purposes with each other.]

In one of the old buildings in the city of Iaroslavl in Northwestern Russia, there is an unusual tea shop run by the artist and architect Il'ia Brandukov and his wife, a sculptor. They have decorated the courtyard with a large painted wooden figure of a clown and also with a number of antique metal ornaments rescued from buildings in the city that were being torn down. When Brandukov came to Iaroslavl, he was disturbed by the fact that many people had no suitable gathering place, although the city has three dramatic and puppet theaters, an orchestra, a circus, several movie houses, a community center, club houses and discotheques. The hobby clubs work according to a strict schedule and ordinary social contact in the evening is hindered by loud dance music and a large number of rather drunken young men. The anti-drunkenness campaign is conducted quite actively but without any noticeable results. "A major condition for the success of any such campaign is that people be taught to socialize without alcohol. After all, it is an illusion to think that liquor brings people closer together: it loosens the tongues, but, when tipsy, everyone hears only himself." Brandukov decided to revive the tradition of the Russian tea house. There were many fruitless discussions with the public organizations on this project, and then Brandukov decided to act on his own. He hunted up a unused samovar, put it in working order, and set up an electric hot plate. He bought two dozen glasses and put a sign on his studio door saying: "All interested are invited on Fridays to drink tea." He asked the first people who came to bring a package of tea, or sugar, or cookies if they wanted to come again. He also set up a children's corner with a swing and several wooden animals. The local teenagers helped him because they liked him, and because he worked well and didn't lecture them. It was decided to set up wooden figures of folklore characters around the children's area. The local housing committee didn't like the figure of Baba-Yaga [the evil witch -- actually, the ancient Slavic goddess of death] and had it taken away, but Brandukov put it back. It was removed again but then a major newspaper [that is, from Leningrad or Moscow] supported him and the figure stayed put. Brandukov was asked to make a plan for the children's area, taking the surrounding houses into account. One of the people who had to approve the plan was a woman representative of the city department of public works [which in the Soviet context includes the buildings] warned Brandukov that if he included Baba-Yaga she wouldn't accept it. He said, "Ah, but this time she'll be kind and beautiful, just as you are." This woman even came to the next tea party at the studio, where Brandukov made some suggestions for local beautification, including turning the stumps of old trees which had been taken down into playground sculptures. The woman from the department of public works offered the use of a tractor to move the stumps after they'd been dug out.

"When I decided to write about Il'ia Brandukov, I was assailed by doubts. After all his tea house has neither a program nor a plan of work. Won't the artist's fancy prove to be unstable and transitory?

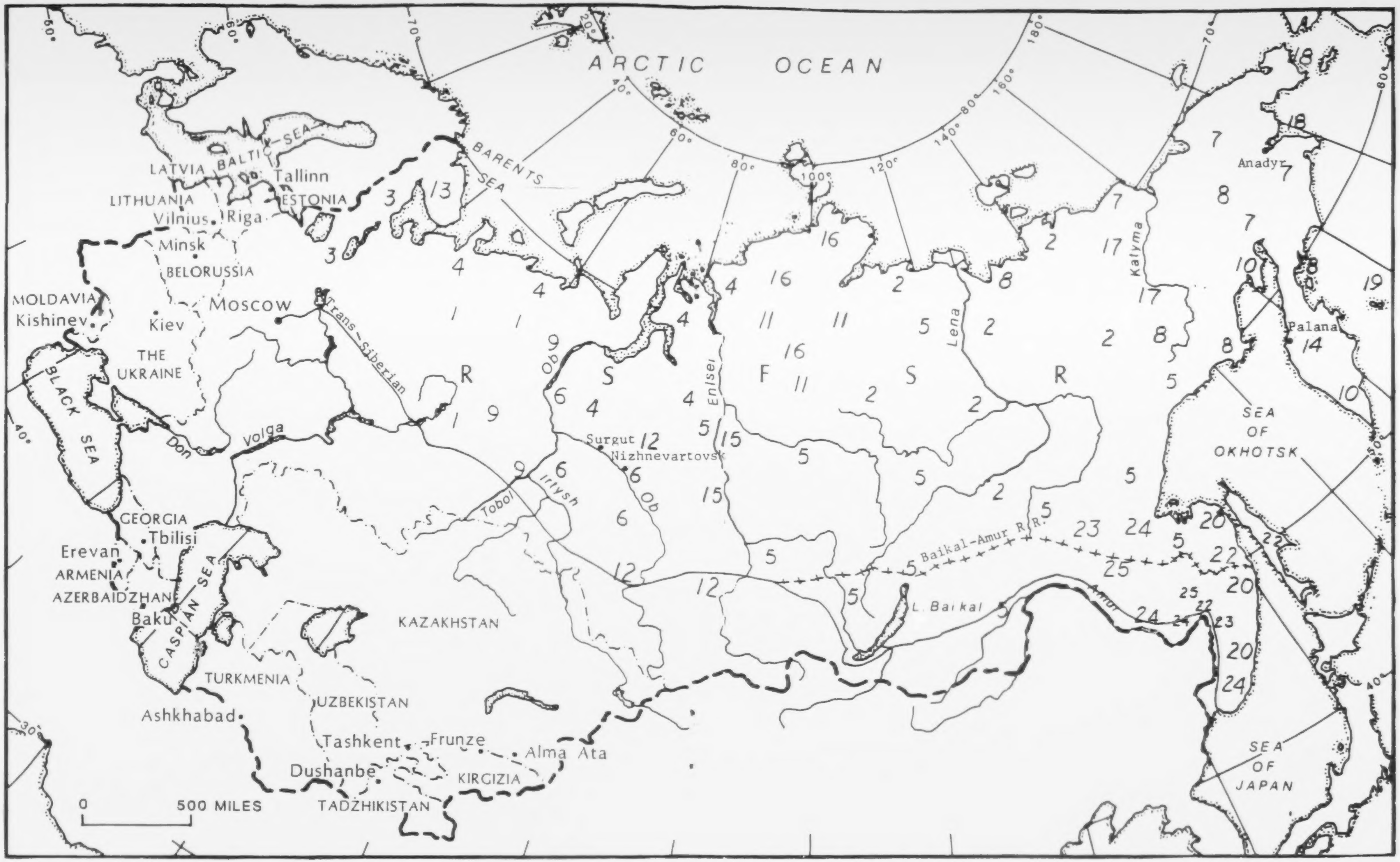
"But it's also true that in various cities in the country there is an increasing number of unofficial groups of people with a passionate desire to solve the same problems. I also spent a wonderful evening in Iaroslavl with the members of the people's movie studio, "Youth," which has existed for twenty years. They entertain with absolutely no alcohol, drink tea with sukhari [crisp toast, usually made from sweet breads and eaten with tea] and have discussions about the movies and showings of documentary films."

Brandukov and his friends have also had less pleasant experiences. Some regulars at the tea house tried to expand it by renovating an abandoned two-story building belonging to the "Polimermash" factory [which apparently makes machinery for processing plastics]. They were told that if they could put the building in order they could use it, but when it was put in order the factory wanted it for a branch of its clinic.

"But then, we shouldn't be too hasty with terms like 'indifference' and 'bureacratism.' After all, if the Polimermash people take the building for the public tea house under their jurisdiction they will have to be responsible for everything that goes on there. They will have to worry about additional staff: the tea house, if it is included in the official list of city facilities, will need a watchman, a cleaning woman, and a bookkeeper. Why should the factory take on extra bother?

"But let's think about why Brandukov's tea house was started in the first place. It rose from the initiative of the people and the requirements of the time. The public tea house came into being because many people don't care for the bureaucratism and regimentation that characterizes some cultural and educational institutions. People are sick and tired of the drunkenness which disfigures life and the empty talk about the struggle against it, which does not prevent drunkenness but rather covers up a condescending and tolerant attitude toward it. Only sobriety can be contrasted to drunkenness."

ROZANOV, A., "Priglashenie k chaiu" ["Invitation to Tea"], Nauka i religiia, No. 8, 1985, pp. 19-22.


ARCTIC OCEAN
BARENTS SEA
BALTIC SEA
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
SEA OF OKHOTSK
SEA OF JAPAN
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
ESTONIA
Tallinn
Riga
Vilnius
Minsk
BELORUSSIA
MOLDAVIA
Kishinev
Kiev
THE UKRAINE
Moscow
Trans-Siberian
Volga
Don
Ob
Irtysh
Tobol
Enisei
Lena
Kalyma
Surgut
Nizhnevartovsk
Baikal-Amur R.R.
L. Baikal
Amur
Anadyr
Palana
GEORGIA
Tbilisi
Erevan
ARMENIA
AZERBAIDZHAN
Baku
TURKMENIA
Ashkhabad
UZBEKISTAN
Tashkent
Frunze
Alma Ata
Dushanbe
KIRGIZIA
TADZHIKISTAN
KAZAKHSTAN
R S F S R
0 500 MILES

PEOPLES OF SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST

1. Komi-Zyryans
2. Yakuts
3. Karelians
4. Nentsy
5. Evenki
6. Khanty
7. Chukchi
8. Eveny
9. Mansi
10. Koryaks
11. Dolgans
12. Sel'kups
13. Saami
14. Itel'mens
15. Kets
16. Nganasans
17. Yukagirs
18. Eskimos
19. Aleuts
20. Nivkhi
21. Negidals
22. Nanais
23. Ul'chi
24. Udegeis
25. Orochi

[The following essay was originally prepared for a Colloquium "Cultures et Nationalites En RSFSR: Les échanges interculturels en Russie sovietique," sponsored jointly by Institute National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales and Institut Kul'tury RSFSR, Moscow, held in Paris, November 14-15, 1985 and read by Yves Perret-Gentil. According to Dr. Perret-Gentil, the essay caused a considerable stir among our Soviet colleagues, who seemed unaware of V.I. Boiko's work and who were unprepared to deal with Ethel Dunn's data. They did, however, point out that the data are over ten years old. The problem of "the ethnographic present," particularly as it relates to the Peoples of the Soviet North, remains a crucial one, and Ethel Dunn has added some additional material, hoping that our readers will share our interest. The additions to our map in this issue are adaptations from a map included with Gail A. Fondahl's article "Native Peoples of the Soviet North," in The Northern Raven, Volume 5, No. 1, Summer 1985, published by the Center for Northern Studies, Wolcott, Vermont.]

URBANIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET NORTH

by Ethel Dunn

According to the 1979 All-Union Census of the population of the USSR, there were 158,324 persons classified as members of the "Peoples of the North." The largest of these peoples are the Nentsy (29,894), and the smallest the Negidal'tsy (504). If we consult a map of Siberia, we see that the Peoples of the North are distributed over a very wide area and are today living in regions of intense economic development. They merit our attention because their fate illustrates what can and what cannot be done when governments set out to alter cultures.

The Peoples of the North make up a special category of the Soviet population, in terms both of culture and economy and of law. To begin with they were at the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917 the most primitive of all the ethnic groups inhabiting the Russian Empire. This means that on the one hand they lacked both agriculture and any kind of machinery driven by non-human power, and on the other hand they also lacked indigenous political organization. At that time, they lived by hunting (both for meat and other raw materials for their own use and for furs for the market), fishing, and gathering wild foods, and in some cases by raising reindeer. They were scattered in small groups, usually numbering no more than a few hundred people, over immense stretches of wilderness -- sub-Arctic forest, frozen tundra, and mountains. They paid a special tribute in furs and other goods to the tsarist government, and had sporadic contact, at a few places, with Russian traders, soldiers, settlers, and missionaries.

In some ways the Peoples of the North greatly resembled the more primitive of the North American Indian tribes, particularly those living in Canada. But the differences which emerged after the Revolution were just as important as the similarities. The Northern peoples acquired a special status in Soviet policy at an early date, and in some respects they still have it. Special health and education facilities were set up, and they were given guaranteed access to regular institutions of higher education -- a kind of early affirmative action. Many members of the Northern peoples -- though still a relatively small proportion --have acquired intellectual professions, and become political leaders in their home districts. Where their numbers are sufficient within a particular area, they exercise local political power through the Soviets and the local Party organs. William Mandel, who chooses to stress the positive aspects of Soviet life, notes that a Chukchi woman is the chairperson of the Chukchi National Okrug on the Bering Strait, which is the equivalent of "having an Ogalalla Sioux as Governor of South Dakota." The most important difference between the peoples of the Soviet North and the American Indians is that the members of the Northern peoples are citizens with the same rights and duties as all other citizens -- not wards of the state, as American Indians living on the reservations still are.

Stephen P. Dunn and Ethel Dunn studied the extent to which the Soviet regime's attempt to foster native culture while giving the Northern peoples a place in the wider Soviet cultural world has succeeded. The situation in the 1960s as they described it seems qualitatively much the same in the 1970s and 1980s, at least to judge by Soviet descriptions published in 1985. The Soviet regime has gone and continues to go to considerable lengths to preserve and develop native culture. A resolution "On measures for the further economic and social development of regions inhabited by the Peoples of the North," adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on February 26, 1980 (perhaps the latest in a long string of resolutions), is considered by Soviet ethnographers an important indication of the regime's concern for the fate of the wood- bone- and fur-working shops in the Khanty-Mansi National Okrug, even though locally little has yet been done. Much is made of the fact that the Koryak "Mengo" Dance Ensemble has travelled to France and the United States as well as to Communist bloc countries, and that the "Russia" State Dance Ensemble staged a Koryak dance.

At the same time it must be said that the traditional culture is being assaulted by the process of industrialization and development in Siberia, which began on a broad scale in 1926 and has been intensifying since 1959. To take two examples of cities in the region settled by the Khanty and Mansi, which are now busy oil and industrial centers, Surgut in 1966 had a population of 15,500; in 1979, it had 107,000. Nizhnevartovskoe during the same period grew from 5700 to 109,000.

With this brief sketch of the issues and problems surrounding the development of the North, I would like to turn to a consideration of the extent to which the Peoples of the North have become urbanized and part of the Soviet working class. Two of the Peoples of the North, the Evenki (numbering 27,531) and the Nanais (10,516) have been studied in some detail by V. I. Boiko, the Evenki apparently because in 1970 they were the least urbanized (15.3% of the population) and had the smallest rate of increase since 1959 (1.2%), and the Nanais because they ranked among the most urbanized (25.9% of the total population), with a higher rate of increase (2.1%) as compared with 1959.

Before I begin, however, I would like to point out that language and nationality (or perhaps more properly, ethnicity), at least in the case of the Peoples of the North, are no longer as closely connected as they were when the theoretical positions of Soviet nationality policy were laid down. Census data reveal that 45,367 of the Peoples of the North consider Russian their native language, and 85,487 consider themselves fluent in Russian. In addition, 15,219 consider a language other than Russian or the language of their group to be their native language. Among the Peoples of the North living in the Yakut ASSR, for example, two-thirds consider Yakut their native language. (In this republic, 1,205 Russians made the same declaration.) These facts perhaps only illustrate the thesis that one speaks the language of the people one lives among, but if we grant this, we may also assume that, at least in part, the language one uses determines how one lives. This opinion is probably implicitly shared by V. A. Tugolukov, who notes that among the Evens (who are sttled in the north-eastern regions of the Yakut ASSR, Magadan Oblast, Kamchatka, and Khabarovsk Krai), the native language is taught as a subject because of the multi-ethnic nature of their villages, and schooling is conducted in Russian. "Knowledge of Russian gives them the opportunity to acquire the professions of teacher, doctor, equipment operator, zootechnician, etc. Even children who, for whatever reason, were reared before school in the families of reindeer breeders [rather than being maintained at state expense in boarding facilities], and while studying in school went during vacations to their parents in the taiga, not only know the native language better but more easily acquire the habits necessary for work in the traditional branches of the economy, including reindeer breeding. However, there are relatively few such children among the general mass of Even youth. Therefore the problem of adding to reindeer breeding personnel is among the most pressing in all the areas inhabited by the Evens." Tugolukov, apparently not tongue-in-cheek, also reports that in some places, along with the regular rations, the administration sends boxes of grapes to the reindeer brigades, which pleases the breeders because they see it as a sign of the prestige of the profession. Other Northerners, however, remark that they really need weather-tight portable housing.

The migration of Northerners to cities has been taking place for some time, but relatively few studies have been made on the extent and consequences of the migration. Ch. M. Taksami, himself a Nivkh, was one of the first Soviet scholars to investigate "the emergence of a working class" among the Peoples of the North, during expeditions to Sakhalin, the Amur drainage basin, and the major industrial centers of the Far East in 1956, 1957, 1961, 1962, 1967, and 1968-1969. He notes that in 1926, only 40 Northerners lived in towns, although some peoples had engaged in seasonal non-agricultural labor even before the Revolution. He was able to determine that over 350 natives lived in Komsomolsk, over 400 in Khabarovsk, 200 in Amursk, 340 in Poronaisk, over 100 in Nikolaevsk, and "a considerable number" lived in workers' settlements and raion centers. Relatively few of these urbanites are professionals and paraprofessionals, since "the majority live and work in their native rural raions." Many of these workers learned their skills at trade schools, though on-the-job training also seems important. Northern women also work in light industry, where, it seems, they are engaged in jobs below their educational levels. The children of the city-dewlling Northerners "have only a passive knowlege of the language of their nationality," presumably because schooling is in Russian. Mixed marriages are rare. Taksami concludes his survey by saying that over 20% of the native population are employed in "state industrial enterprises, construction organizations, and state farms," and about 10% are employed by "public organizations, the government, schools, medical and cultural institutions, and also in numerous other governmental organizations." An educated guess would be that a very high proportion of the former category are male and an equally high percentage of the latter are female. By implication, in the late 1960s, Soviet policy continued to encourage the training of native personnel in medicine and the humanities, placing graduates in the native settlements.

As V. I. Boiko is careful to point out, it is the rural nature of the settlements rather than something specific to, say, the Evenki that causes the problem: in rural settlements, only certain jobs are available. In Northern settlements in particular, the impact of technology is significantly less evident than elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Parents usually teach their children traditional skills, but when the children are sent away to schools that do not emphasize the traditional way of life, to say nothing of developing that way of life, a situation evolves in which fewer and fewer young natives opt for traditional occupations, and most hold very negative opinions about the future of the traditional way of life.

It is possible to argue that even the pattern of migration of the Peoples of the North is not unlike that of some rural Russians, who migrate first not to the largest cities but rather to a nearby, medium-size city where conditions are close to those they are familiar with, and where other villagers and kinfolk have gone. Among the Nanais, for example, the choice is more likely to be the small town of Amursk rather than the much larger Komsomolsk-on-Amur. It is even possible to argue that the tendency for Northerners over the age of 30 to resettle in larger villages rather than cities is not unlike the case of Russian rural women in the 1950s. However, I believe that more than a simple time lag is evident here. Babakov implies a certain inhibition of migration among the Peoples of the North when he points out that in 1970, 23.67% of the Mansi, 13.35% of the Khanty, and 4.75% of the Sel'kups were city-dwellers, and by his calculations, 1.2%-1.3% of the population had left the rural parts of the Khanty-Mansi and Iamalo-Nen National Okrugs in the years between the censuses (i.e., between 1959 and 1970). This figure excluded students sent away for education and included "professionals, paraprofessionals who had served their two or three years on assignment after graduation, clerical workers transferred to towns, and young people who had acquired 'urban' skills." The chief occupations of the rural population in this region are reindeer breeding, hunting, and fishing, with many more women than men doing mental work; 15.7% of the population produced no tangible goods (as physicians, teachers and community center workers and other types of white-collar employees).

I. A. Argunov and V. S. Lukovtsev, reviewing a book by Boiko and N. V. Vasil'ev on socio-professional mobility of Evenki and Eveny in Yakutiia, published in 1981, point out that according to the 1970 Census, 21.3% of the Evenki and Eveny were employed in mental labor; 14.1% of the Evenki and 8.3% of the Eveny worked as engineering and technical workers in industry, 10.4% of the Evenki and 8.3% of the Eveny worked as specialists in agriculture and forestry; 19% of the Evenky and 17.9% of the Eveny worked as medical personnel; scientific personnel, teachers and educators made up 31.6% and 38.8% of all persons employed in mental labor. The heavy concentration in medical and teaching fields is particularly striking because it suggests a certain restraint on mobility out of rural areas. (Argunov and Lukovtsev say that 7.3% of the Evenki and 6.8% of the Eveny worked in industry in primarily physical occupations, and 5% and 3.6% respectively were in transport, 5.9% and 2.2% in construction, etc. Of the natives surveyed, 69.4% wanted to go on with their studies, 15.7% of urban residents and 24.7% of rural residents wanted to change the kind of work they did. Three times more young people migrated to cities in the 1964-74 period than in the preceding decade, and 37.8% of the potential migrants in the village were oriented toward life in the cities.

If, as seems likely, most young Northerners are still being trained in medicine and the humanities, it seems reasonable to expect that women in particular would migrate to larger villages rather than to the cities, since they make up the majority of persons in cultural and teaching positions -- that is, those occupations involved in the preservation of local culture. The relatively high degree of dissatisfaction with working conditions did not always lead to migration out of the area, and Boiko has cited this fact as supporting the wisdom of creating cities within areas of settlement by the Peoples of the North. Boiko says: "The unemployed population (those not working and housewives, excluding students of working age and pensioners) make up among the Evenki 14.7%, and among the Russians, 6.9%. Primarily these are women (8 out of 10). In the group of "unemployed" Evenki (including students of working age), 65.4% are youth under 30. By education, 40% have four grades of schooling or less, 40% have incomplete secondary, and 20% have secondary and secondary specialized education." More than twice as many Evenki as Russians are doing physical labor, and the percentages of those doing skilled work with machines is 1.7% and 14.1% respectively. Not surprisingly, the highest levels of dissatisfaction with the conditions of labor are found among those with general and specialized secondary education in jobs where such educations are superfluous. An almost identical percentage of Russian and Evenki schoolchildren said that after graduation they would like to go to work building the Baikal-Amur Railroad, and since not more than 10% of the population is engaged in reindeer breeding, this might seem like a good idea. However, Boiko expresses some concern for the survival of the family group and for the continuity the traditional reindeer breeding economy, in which at present the majority of personnel are middle-aged or elderly, and laborious household chores are borne almost entirely by women.

The building of the Baikal-Amur Railroad might have been expected to absorb surplus labor, but labor recruitment was not necessarily geared toward the local population. Voronov and Smirnov have shown that those who are not native to Siberia or the Far East were 7.2 times more likely to leave the BAM site than those who had previously lived in the area, and those who had lived in rural areas were less likely to leave than were urban residents. It would seem that the Peoples of the North would form a natural labor pool, but indications are that on-the-job training is much less a factor in job mobility than it was a generation ago. This is part of a natural process, and a mark of how far the Soviet Union as a whole has come in its drive to make itself a nation of workers (as distinct from peasants). However, it does pose a problem for rural residents without the necessary training to make the transition, and the dilemma is nowhere more sharply drawn than for the Peoples of the North. Boiko has urged the integration and further development of the traditional economy of the Peoples of the North. He and others have also stressesd that to insist that the Peoples of the North, especially the youth, be oriented only toward traditional occupations would be to stunt their intellectual and cultural development. As he has said so well: "To preserve only the traditional, based on the most humane feelings, willingly or unwillingly leads to artifical preservation and support of that which historical development has already doomed." Neither he nor I, I think, would want to be on record as advocating only one path of development for the Peoples of the North, but it is certainly extremely difficult to decide on a single direction for the Peoples of the North.

I. S. Gurvich, who has spent most of his life studying the Peoples of the North, has published the most recent data to come to my attention (the results of a field expedition by the Institute of Ethnography in 1981). He says that the data speak for themselves, but exactly what they say is not as clear to me as to him. To begin with, he notes that the largest layer of professional and paraprofessional people among the Peoples of the North are teachers, who make up from 50% to 70% of all specialists with higher and specialized secondary education. In the Chukchi National Okrug, they are less than a third. He gives the example of employment of Northern peoples in the economic centers of sovkhozy in Provideniia raion in the settlement of Sereniki in 1980. There were 703 persons including 502 Northerners (284 Eskimos, and 219 Chukchi; 235 Northerners were employed in the public sector; 79 of them had higher and specialized secondary educations (about a third). Another 52 persons had incomplete secondary education, and these were frequently working in ordinary jobs in the traditional economy and in construction. He says that not more than a third of the able-bodied population was working in the traditional economy, and he goes on to report a great variety of other occupations. In the Koryak National Orung, in Oliutorskii raion, there are 2497 Northerners, including 1018 able-bodied. Thirty-two percent were working in traditional occupations, 28.5% in construction, and a surprisingly low 1.3% in Soviet and Party organs. He did a study among students in Penzha raion, in the Koryak National Okrug, and found that 28 persons were studying in institutions of higher learning, and 48 in trade-technical schools and specialized secondary schools. Of these, 44% were in teacher-training institutions, 15% in institutions for training fishermen, hunters, reindeer breeders and fur farmers, 10% in medical institutions. The remainder were studying cultural and service trades. He notes that the authorities have only now begun to think of training the personnel most in demand (economists, bookkeepers, engineers, and technicians). It is worth repeating that these latter professions are in short supply in rural areas throughout the Soviet Union. The lack of them in Northern areas looks more obvious because of the need to preserve the native economy. This is considered a part of rationally approaching the fulfilment of the new Food Program recently instituted by Gorbachev. What cannot be grown in the North must be imported at considerable expense from more southerly regions of the country.

Gurvich reports that the proportion of urban Northerners has grown to 10.1% at present (from 2% in 1970). Still, most of these are concentrated in the city of Anadyr (400 persons, a significant proportion of them being professionals and para-professionals). There is another large concentration of Northerners at Provedeniia Bay. In 1980, including the settlement of Ureliki there were 299 persons, including 157 Eskimos, 48 Chukchi, 4 Chuvantsy [Russianized Northerners], and 2 Eveny. Of these, 84 were working, 26 of them in white-collar professions. There were also 27 skilled workers, with the remaining 31 classified as unskilled (cleaning women, nurses, etc.).

In the Koryak National Okrug, there were in 1981, thirty-four settlements classified from small (130-400) to large (1300-3900). It is clear that in this region, "rural" means traditional or Northern, since only 4%-8% in the larger settlements are Northerners, the exception being the Okrug center of Palana, where 24% are natives and 10% of the entire native population of the Okrug is concentrated.

If we compare these data with those presented by Boiko a decade earlier, it would seem that a balance between preserving tradition and altering culture has not yet been achieved. Gurvich's data imply either under-employment or unemployment (at least in the public sector) for large segments of the Northern population, particularly in rural areas, but unlike Boiko, Gurvich gives neither sex nor age breakdowns. In rural areas, central settlements can almost be called retirement centers, which does not bode well for the traditional economy. It might be argued that in some areas, native teachers are in short supply, but the need for native teachers, judged strictly on linguistic grounds, seems to be long past.

The material I have cited here is almost entirely statistical. Statistics tell us little about human beings. On the other hand, the data suggest a certain impasse in Soviet nationality policy as it applies to peoples who before the Revolution were on an extremely "primitive" level -- without complex technology, without indigenous political organizations, and, in most cases, even without agriculture. The Soviet North deserves our attention precisely because Soviet cultural and economic planning in this region comes up against an environment which has changed only very slowly, at great expense in labor and resources, and in some respects not at all.

SOURCES USED

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The Station logo, at left, is one version of the ancient Slavic Tree of Life

e Station Relay

and views on daily life in the Soviet Union

32 Highgate Road
Kensington, CA 94707

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The Station Relay

Facts and views on daily life in the Soviet Union

Volume 1, No. 4 March, 1986

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Our cover this issue is by Diana Wong, the same lovely lady who did the walrus last issue. Diana tells us that she prefers to use her married name, a point that was not quite clear before. We do apologize for the misprint in her name in issue #3. This whimsical one-legged bear signals our story on the disabled in this issue, and is only a distant and much gentler cousin of the one-legged bear in the Russian folktale.

* * *

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CORRESPONDENCE

Your Issue No. 3 opens with a splendid exchange of letters. Regrettably, I do not believe that, in the rest of the issue, the editors live up to what they say in responding to the published letter from a reader.

Seriatim. The "Shop Signs" and "Crisis Center" pieces: fine. But "The Popular Science Lecture" is introduced by a paragraph ending: "the main problem in the following commentary is lack of money. What does this say about how the regime has ordered its priorities?"

The very first sentence of the Soviet article reads: "In all of the Soviet Union there are probably only about a thousand planetarium lecturers." My emphasis. My World Almanac lists 15 "major" U.S. planetariums. Since that list includes such relatively small cities as Baton Rouge, La., and Flint, Michigan, I wonder how many smaller planetariums there are, and what their total lecture staffs total. I feel safe in guessing that it is very much less than a thousand. It was the job of the Station Relay to investigate that before posing the pejorative question quoted above. As of 1974, permanent planetariums were functioning in 62 cities of the USSR (Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia, Vol. 19, 1975.) Knowing something about Soviet popular-science policies, I would be certain that the number is larger today, despite true horror stories such as that about Taganrog. So which regime has misordered priorities, Moscow or Washington? More importantly, does the use of that story, reinforced by the opening question, strengthen or weaken the "evil empire" stereotype of the USSR?

Next. "An Invitation to Tea," second paragraph: "48% of prospective brides would divorce because of drunkenness." No. They would divorce if their husbands became drunkards. So your conclusion "we see from the fact [48%, etc.]... that the consumption of alcohol affects nearly everyone in the Soviet Union" is totally unjustified by the statistic cited. All it tells us about are the standards for marriage set by prospective brides, and is useful only for discussing whether those standards are higher or lower than in the past or in other countries.

The following paragraph capsules Solzhenitsyn's For the Good of the Cause as describing "how a school which was built by the efforts of the faculty and students is taken over by another agency for completely unrelated purposes. This frequently happens in the Soviet Union..." The impression left with the unsophisticated reader you are aiming at is that school is not held in schools in the USSR any more than planetariums function in appropriate buildings. Utterly inexcusable, to anyone who has wandered through any Soviet city at going-to-school or leaving-school hours.

It's nice that the Brandukovs have opened their tea-house in Iaroslavl. But by not telling us that city's population, we cannot compare its cultural facilities to those of U.S. cities. Iaroslavl had a little over 600,000 people, or somewhat less than San Francisco. Your article tells us that it has three live theaters (meaning, as you know, permanent repertory companies in their own buildings), and orchestra (meaning professional, otherwise it would be prefaced by "people's", a circus (always meaning that it is housed in a building for that purpose), several [a number of? -W.M.] movie houses, a community center, club houses and discotheques." That compares quite well with San Francisco, one of our most cultured cities, although S.F. also has an incredible number of bars, a fact that might be considered in terms of the concern with drunkenness in the Soviet article. A hint of the non-professional facilities also available in Iaroslavl is provided by the reference to the "people's" movie studio, in operation for 20 years. To open self-starting tea houses, even privately-owned and operated, would be very nice, no doubt.

The article, "Urbanization and Industrialization of the Peoples of the Soviet North," says of me: "William Mandel, who chooses to stress the positive aspects of Soviet life." Why the editorializing? It warns the typical U.S. teacher, subjected to anti-Sovietism lifelong by the procedures listed in your own letter in No. 2, to stay away from my work. You say: "traditional culture is being assaulted..." Would it not be more accurate and less hostile to say: "cannot remain unchanged in the face of..."? You counterpose the sending of grapes to reindeer-breeders against the building of portable housing. These are just not comparable categories. Do we know how many houses the total grape-purchase budget would buy? Can a grape-grower make weather-tight portable housing? Man does not live by reindeer-meat alone.

In describing urbanized Peoples of the North, an accurate statement is given pejorative phrasing: "Relatively few of these urbanites are professionals and paraprofessionals, since [my emphasis - W.M.] the majority live and work in their native rural raions." But to American Indians, that last is simply marvelous. Likewise, to them, the percentage of Evenki and Eveny in mental labor, in skilled jobs, in medicine, in teaching and research, is absolutely thrilling. Why on earth use the wording "restraint on mobility out of rural areas" to describe success in getting doctors, nurses, and teachers to serve their own people? Have you investigated the figures among Russians, even nationwide, to determine what percentage of all professionals and semi-professionals fall into these fields, and therefore how the indigenes compare? And is it not well-established from the experience of large Soviet nations that the urge to acquire professions always begins in the fields that have application to the rural lives people came out of?

The article says that "cultural and teaching positions" are "those occupations involved in the preservation of local culture." Where peoples at the level of the Northerners are concerned, it is the hunters, fishermen, reindeer-herders, crafts-people and shamans who chiefly preserve local culture. Your own statistics on linguistic assimilation demonstrate this.

The use of the term "unemployed" is totally false semantically, and as economics. What you are referring to is properly termed "population not in the labor force." "Unemployed" are people who want work but can't find any.

You describe the 1.3% of Northerners working in Soviet and Party organs as "surprisingly low." What percentage of the gross USSR population work in such organs? What percentage of Russians?

The penultimate paragraph imputes to Gurvich the implication of high under-employment or unemployment. You mean they just "hang out," like here? If not, the words used are unjustified. When you write that "the need for native teachers...seems to be long past," one cannot argue when limited by your "judged strictly on linguistic grounds." But what about for the preservation of ethnic self-esteem?

Your closing paragraph says: "Statistics tell us little about human beings." Since it is you who brought up the matter of my writing, I am justified in saying that that is precisely why I employ the interview technique to discuss these very matters. Your statement that "the data suggest a certain impasse in Soviet nationality policy" as it applies to the peoples discussed leaves me in open-mouthed astonishment. Your own data on professionals, para-professions, skilled workers, and the degree to which they work in the countryside to advance their own peoples suggest to me that that nationality policy has been successful to a degree without precedent.

William M. Mandel

From the Editors:

[Our answer to William Mandel's letter will be in two parts, signed separately by the contributing editors, to reflect the distribution of major responsibility for the individual articles.]

I am grateful to my friend William Mandel for his detailed attention to The Station Relay and for giving me the opportunity to expand somewhat on some matters of editorial policy.

First of all, our journal is not directed primarily at "unsophisticated readers." To be sure, it does contain certain aids for the non-specialist, such as glossaries, notes, and brief explanations (though, according to some readers, not enough) inserted in the text, but we have no intention of pulling our intellectual punches or of simplifying matters which are inherently complex.

Where we do not make explicit comparisons with conditions in the United States (and we don't have room to make many), we expect our readers to make their own. We also expect them to read critically and carefully -- at least as carefully as we write.

On the article about planetarium lectures, the point is precisely that a scale of facilities and personnel probably much greater than we have in the same field -- Mandel is quite right about this -- leaves the Soviet writer acutely dissatisfied. The item was put in to illustrate the presence of interest groups within the Soviet population -- a fact which contradicts our usual perceptions -- and to suggest an answer to the question: "How does one agitate in the Soviet Union?" The answer is: by different ground rules and methods than in the United States, but potentially with no less effect. Our question about priorities was strongly, though not explicitly, raised in the Soviet article, and if this didn't come through in our rendering, then the rendering was inadequate. The answer to Mandel's question about which regime has misordered priorities, it seems to me, is also obvious: both -- for different reasons, in different respects, to different degrees, and at various times, depending on which field one happens to be considering, and on who one is. By publishing *The Station Relay*, we personally are affirming our belief that an informed electorate must be capable of ranking and combining facts and issues and not simply considering each in isolation.

On "An Invitation to Tea," Mandel's objections are in part purely stylistic. The word "would" is generally understood to introduce a conditional statement, usually (as in this case) contrary to present fact. Mandel seems to have missed the point -- and it may not have been stated as clearly as it might have been: the girls who were asked their opinions were not yet married, and this makes their view of marriage somewhat troubling. One Soviet marriage in every three at the present time can be expected to end in divorce, although there are wide variations from Republic to Republic. Alcoholism (drunkenness) in one's spouse is the leading cause for divorce in all the studies that we have seen. If Mandel means to say that alcoholism is not a serious economic, social, medical and moral problem at least in the European USSR, and is not recognized as such by a great many Soviet citizens, probably including a majority of women, then he is sadly mistaken. (The situation may be different in other parts of the Soviet Union -- particularly if, as I am inclined to think, the causes of *Russian* alcoholism are at least partly biological. There will be substantially more on this in the next issue, and in later issues, if we get that far.)

Our research on the Soviet family, including marriage customs, has not been exhaustive, it is true, but it has been intensive and continuing. Whether the standards of young Soviet women differ from those of their contemporaries in other countries or from what they were in the past would be useful to know, and gratifying to have at our fingertips, but is not relevant to the point under discussion here.

As for citing Solzhenitsyn: he is a perceptive writer with unfortunate political views, and we cite him in support of the supposition that any enterprise *not initially approved by the state and controlled by it* can be taken over by the state or its agent if it feels this to be appropriate. The frequency of such occurrences is attested to by the participants in the debate in *Literaturnaia gazeta* [*Literary Newspaper*] and *Novyi mir* [*New World*] when *For the Good of the Cause* was first published. (That debate is summarized, with extensive excerpts in the introduction and appendix to the 1971 Sphere Books, London edition of Solzhenitsyn's novella.) Our linking of the case described in "An Invitation to Tea" is supported by the concluding paragraphs of the story, which are a direct quote from the Soviet author.

The point about Brandukov's tea house is that it consciously excludes alcohol and appears to appeal to people who do have access to an impressive array of other cultural facilities, but do not use them for various reasons. Most Soviet cultural facilities, until very recently, have been used mainly by the young and unmarried. The tea house is an alternative, well within a certain tradition of the Russian temperance movement; whether Brandukov knows it or not is uncertain. The temperance movement in the 1920s and 1930s was dominated by Baptists and other "sectarians." There is no indication that Brandukov belongs to this movement, and that in itself is interesting.

Stephen P. Dunn

In writing "William Mandel chooses to stress the positive aspects in Soviet life," I am editorializing only a little, since Mandel has said in print elsewhere that he prefers to take this approach when dealing with the Soviet Union, and his letter to The Station Relay affirms that that was no isolated incident. He hardly needs to sell the interview technique to a practicing anthropologist. I too have fought the battle for acceptance of Soviet data, and I am convinced that we reach the public best when we cease insisting that only we initiates can know the truth. My own work has consistently sought to establish the limits of cultural change, and if it is negative to note that limits exist, my critics and I will have to agree to disagree. I admire much of what has been achieved in the Soviet Union, particularly in the North, because I have met some of the ethnographers whose work I report, and I know them to be dedicated people who have devoted their lives to the cause of change. However, without wishing to be embroiled in endless political arguments, I do not believe that any cause is served by taking the position that socialism is in every respect superior to capitalism, the more so because socialism has a plan. In the North, the plan is in trouble. "Assaulted" is a strong word, indeed, but "cannot remain unchanged in the face of" is milder than my material and my temperament permit. Commitment is not synonymous with hostility. My reading of the sources suggests that in the not-too-distant future, the native culture will be gone, and, at best, we will see something we can call Soviet; at worst, it will be Siberian. It may be Siberian now, but if so, this is only a temporary phenomenon.

"Relatively few of these urbanites are professionals and paraprofessionals, since ...." was inept shorthand for a rather complex idea: most of the unemployed and underemployed in rural areas are young women, whose training has been in the humanities, in precisely those "cultural and teaching positions ... those occupations involved in the preservation of local culture." I am assuming that local (ethnic) cultures are preserved at least in part through language. Tugolukov, whom I quote, implies the same. These young women, if they leave rural areas, often also have to take jobs below their skill-levels or outside their training (in this case as teachers of native languages), because urban culture is usually linguistically Russian. Increasingly, throughout the Soviet Union, rural and native have become firmly linked. Hunters, fishermen, reindeer-breeders, craftspeople and shamans, of course, preserve the traditional culture, but they are, almost without exception, an ageing population, and not enough has been done to train a generation to replace them. A curious exception may be the shamans: in some areas, the first generation of native writers was the sons and daughters of shamans, very apt, because the shaman was, among other things, an accomplished storyteller.

As for how this compares with Russians or other ethnic groups in the Soviet Union (Central Asians, Moldavians, or Ukrainians, where I have done some research), Boiko's data suggest that the aspirations of Northerners closely parallel those of the other peoples of the USSR, and I would count this a success of Soviet nationality policy. On the other hand, dissatisfaction among some strata of the population (primarily those who are unable to use their skills or their education in the rural settings in which they live) is also high, and, given the fact that the traditional economy is not being modernized fast enough, the situation could be said to be acute. Ethnic self-esteem is important; Northern children of mixed marriages at age 16 frequently choose the nationality of their non-Russian parent because the educational privileges extended to Northerners are such a significant benefit, but so is participation in the larger Soviet society, and some data do suggest that the educational level of Northerners lags behind that of other non-Russians. This is not the result of obvious discrimination, but it can and does place "restraint on mobility out of rural areas." My research in the 1960s indicated that Siberian medical institutions set aside places for Northern students, and set up special classes for them so that they could make up their educational deficits; not all the places were taken then, and not all the graduates returned to their home districts. That they may have been able to find suitable employment anywhere in the Soviet Union is one of the successes of the nationality policy, but is hardly a plus for the rural residents who need them, nor does it speak well for the esteem that Northerners themselves have for the traditional way of life.

Mandel asks how many boxes of grapes it takes to equal one portable house. Tugolukov correctly labels the grapes as a status symbol, just as, in the 1960s, another Soviet ethnographer pointed out that a shipment of wool sweaters was seen as a prestige item by the brigade that got them. I'll take bets that the grapes were frozen before they reached their destination, and that the sweaters were no substitute for native clothing. The migration routes of reindeer can extend for a thousand kilometers, a trapper's lines for about the same, and fishing camps (for many reasons) be quite remote from the amenities of civilization (such as schools and hospitals). Adequate housing for Northern conditions was a problem in the 1960s and is still a problem in the 1980s. Not only is a significant portion of the indigenous population still nomadic, but there has been (given the climate and the distribution of consumer goods) a staggering influx of "Europeans." Northerners may not live by reindeer meat alone, but in the North, it is a staple in the diet. The Bartelses (in the source cited in "More on the Soviet North") indicate that one of the privileges of Northern students in Leningrad is a free, high-protein diet, since they were having difficulty subsisting on the usual starchy fare; the same privilege is extended to others in cases of medical necessity.

One possible reason for the publication of the book that I. S. Gurvich edited, and to which he has contributed the most current data at my disposal is that there has been a quite recent reform of the Soviet educational system. The situation in the North is quite peculiar, and not likely to be solved by applying standard remedies. I called 1.3% of Northerners in Soviet and Party organs surprisingly low in the Koryak National Okrug, because the figure Gurvich gives for the Chukchi National Okrug is 12%. The corresponding figures for medical personnel are 5.6% and 19%; education 13.7% and 28%; cultural workers, 14% and 3.4%. I am not certain that we can call the Chukchi region more rural and more homogeneous than the Koryak, but there does seem to be some reason to push the production of native personnel in the Koryak National Okrug. Gurvich's 1980 survey of Northern students in the Koryak National Okrug indicated that 44% were being trained as teachers, and 25% in fields connected with the rural economy.

To me "population not in the labor force" is a circumlocution. Gurvich says that only about a third of the population is employed in the traditional economy, and to the extent that I can interpret the other data in relation both to the areas in question and to other parts of the Soviet Union, I would guess that the social structure is rather top-heavy with administrators and bottom-heavy with unskilled and semiskilled workers. Young people may not "hang out," but they are not with the reindeer brigades, or even necessarily with their parents. Are they "unemployed" or "underemployed"? There are 2479 Northerners in Oliutorskii raion, Koryak National Okrug. Of these, in 1980, 1018 were capable of working; according to Gurvich's tally, 984 were; about 4% are unaccounted for, but, again by implication, more than half of the population needs to be cared for by those who can work. In the Chukchi National Okrug, around Provedeniia Bay, 28% are working in the public sector. We can assume that the rest are somehow attempting to feed themselves and their families by traditional means. Are *they* unemployed or underemployed? American Indians may consider this situation "marvelous," but should they?

Ethel Dunn

MORE CORRESPONDENCE

[Highgate Road Social Science Research Station, since conceiving the idea of *The Station Relay* has been looking for feedback on its materials. Recently, Ethel Dunn received this comment from Elizabeth Talbot, whose Russian and East European Center publishes *Update*, a newsletter for teachers which is "distributed without charge to educators who request it." Our sample included "Television in the Soviet Union," "Why the Soviets Succeed in Sports," "The Multiplicity of Languages in the Soviet Union," and an announcement of *A Review of Print Materials for Teaching About Russia and the Soviet Union*, and *A Guide to Films about the Soviet Union*, among other items, some free, others for purchase from the Center and elsewhere.]

(Continued on page 7)

To the Editors

◆

Thank you for sending me copies of The Station Relay. I enjoyed many of the articles. However, I think that you have not yet decided who your audience is. On the one hand, you seem to want to reach high school students and teachers (survey on p. 3 of No. 1), yet many of the articles seem too specialized for this group. You assume that the reader has a good understanding of how Soviet society operates. For example, you included letters about heating problems without explaining the housing situation in the Soviet Union (i.e. state housing, co-operative apartments, private housing or the use of central heating of buildings from a common source). Similarly you report some consumer complaints without explaining how a Soviet citizen goes about making a complaint. Thus, for a high school teacher, who may be teaching about several very different societies, your newsletter raises a lot of issues without providing some essential background information. I think that you need more of a focus. For example, you could introduce a topic and then provide translation of relevant articles in the Soviet press. An issue could focus on the educational reforms and then provide some excerpts from articles about education.

I am puzzled by the reference to 26 Union Republics in the glossary of your first issue. Are you including the Autonomous Republics?

Elizabeth Talbot
Outreach Coordinator, Russian and East European Center, University of Illinois, at Urbana-Champaign, 1208 West California Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801

◆

Our thanks to Ms. Talbot for pointing out this misprint, blame for which we assign to gremlins in the computer. There are 15 Union Republics. According to Information Moscow, Western Edition, 1985-1986, there are 20 Autonomous Republics, 6 Krays, 8 Autonomous Oblasts, 10 Autonomous Okrugs, and 121 Oblasts. This ranking is in order of degree of autonomy.

◆

I've been following The Station Relay with interest -- I think it's wonderful to make information like this available in a convenient format to people who don't read Russian or have access to good reference materials....

I have several comments I hope will be of help to you. First, I think some of the articles, especially when they are translations of (or paraphrases of) Soviet sources, need more comment. E.g. in "Love and the Judges" (Vol. 1, No. 2) it would have been useful to make clear that the group under discussion is not Russian. It would have been interesting to say more about the Adygei ethnic groups (natsional'nost'), that they are (or were) Muslim (could this explain the custom of "stealing the bride?"), that their Autonomous Oblast in the RSFSR (far from Dagestan) and that they numbered 109,000 in 1979.

Re: the Ossetes in "From the Editors": their Autonomous Oblast and ASSR appear to be directly west of Dagestan. Is this what you mean by "just below?"

On the map on p. 7, Vol. 2, why is the river running through Tbilisi and Azerbaidzhan called the Kareli? Isn't this the Kura?

Another fluvial question: why does the Kolyma river in Western Siberia appear as "Katyma"?

The Ossetes are, of course, an officially recognized natsional'nost'. Is this what you mean by "Caucasian people (ethnic group)"? It would have been interesting to mention that they are the only group in the Bol'shoi Kavkaz who speak an Indo-European language, one which is closely related to Persian and (therefore) distantly to English, Russian, Latin and Greek.

One final comment: it seems to me that Ms. Quale's comment on your subscription rate is a bit harsh. If she receives three issues of Focus on Asia for $8.00/year ($2.67 per issue), then The Station Relay is even cheaper at $2.08 per issue, assuming you will publish 12 issues per year. Good luck in your venture!

David A. Drummond

We reply ....

Our thanks to David Drummond for pointing out geographical errors on our maps. We confess that we had a cartographer draw what we think of as our permanent centerfold, and we took her word for the names. A little research reveals that the Kareli becomes the Kura where Drummond says it does, but the "Katyma" is indeed the Kolyma. When we say "ethnic group," we mean something considerably broader than what is rendered by the Soviet term natsional'nost'. Ethnic groups do not necessarily have their own political structure or cultural facilities, while the Soviet natsional'nosti (nationalities) do. We use the term "ethnic group" because it is the most inclusive, and in the context to which Drummond refers, we were not making a political or organizational point. Indeed, we should have pointed out that the young couple in "Love and the Judges" are probably Moslems. We suspect that the reason Moscow didn't get what it wanted in this case is that "stealing the bride" is a punishable offense under Soviet law, even though in the minds of many Soviet Moslems it remains a legitimate part of marriage custom and a reminder of their ethnic heritage. In fact, there is a custom among Russian peasants which is a symbolic vestige of bride abduction -- usually called "ransoming the bride."

Both Drummond and Talbot say that they would like to see more details and less seemingly random variety, points we will keep in mind if we survive into our second year. It seems to us, however, that we cannot undertake to be for high school students only. The point of our survey was to ask of those who know next to nothing about the Soviet Union: What do you want to know, and how can we help you learn it? Update may be structurally complete within the limits of the form, but the sources Talbot uses make few if any concessions to ordinary people. The Station Relay's purpose is to maintain a dialogue with our readers. Let us know how we are doing! Issue #5 (in May) will be our last issue unless we acquire more subscribers and/or additional sources of funding. ..

* * *

MORE ON THE SOVIET NORTH

Just after issue No. 3 of The Station Relay had gone to press, an exceptionally interesting article by Dennis Bartels and Alice Lorch Bartels landed on Ethel Dunn's desk. Dennis and Alice Bartels, two Canadian educators, visited the Soviet Union in 1981-1982 and conducted extensive interviews among 240 Northern students and faculty at the Faculty of Northern Peoples of the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad. They specifically inquired "whether or not affirmative action benefits for Native people in the field of education are resented.... Most people ... seemed bewildered by our question.... A few non-Natives told ethnic jokes which reflected negative stereotypes of Native people. But we were unable to detect any discriminatory barriers to the advancement of Native people in art, science, education, etc...."

One of the most interesting aspects of the Bartelses' paper is the following table, which speaks eloquently in support of the argument that the Soviet regime is dedicated to fostering Native culture (see Table I).

(Table I on page 9)

TABLE I

NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED IN LANGUAGES OF THE NORTH UP TO 1966[1]

	ABC Books	Text Books	Political Books	Technical and Medical Books	Folklore	Novels, Poetry, etc.	TOTALS
Evenki	18[2] 68,300[3]	60 207,850	30 90,400	18 29,700	11 34,000	102 223,900	239 654,150
Even	12 30,000	56 89,805	13 16,385	- -	3 5,000	59 75,350	143 216,540
Nanai	14 18,900	55 85,600	20 31,600	1 2,000	1 2,500	101 108,000	192 248,600
Ulchi	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 1,000	- -	1 1,000
	1 1,000	6 5,800	1 6,000	- -	1 1,000	- -	9 13,800
Itelmen	1 1,200	1 2,200	- -	- -	- -	- -	2 3,400
Ket	1 1,200	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 1,200
Saami	2 5,450	5 5,000	1 800	- -	- -	1 1,150	9 12,400
Selkup	3 3,900	6 6,800	- -	- -	- -	- -	9 10,700
Chukchi	16 49,900	57 220,250	52 83,200	45 61,000	9 15,250	129 133,300	308 562,900
Koryak	10 25,700	30 52,100	7 12,500	- -	3 3,000	38 47,100	88 140,400
Nivkhi	2 3,500	4 7,160	- -	- -	- -	1 1,500	7 12,160
Eskimo	10 12,000	28 22,800	1 1,000	2 1,600	3 6,000	14 13,200	58 56,600
TOTALS	128 344,050	445 980,915	143 277,685	82 132,400	45 104,550	573 836,350	1,416 2,675,950

Footnotes to Table I

[1] According to the plan for 1981-85, new editions of elementary school readers in 14 Native languages will be published. By 1981, eleven of these had been completed: (1) Nentsi (2) Khanty [3 dialects] (3) Mansi (4) Evenk (5) Chukchi (6) Even (7) Eskimo (8) Koryak (9) Nanai (10) Nivkhi (11) Saami. In 1982, a new text in Selkup was to be published.

[2]. Top number indicates number of books.

[3]. Bottom number indicates number of copies printed.

Source: Belenkin, 1971, pp. 138-39

BARTELS, DENNIS and ALICE LORCH BARTELS, "Affirmative Action Education Programs for Siberian Native People," Canadian Journal of Native Education II (2), 1984, pp. 27-53.

BELENKIN, I. F., "Razvitie pechati na iazykakh Severa" ["The Development of the Press in the Languages of the Peoples of the North"], in: Osushchestvlenie Leninskoi natsional'noi politiki u narodov Krainego Severa [Implementation of the Leninist Nationality Policy Among the Peoples of the Far North]. Moscow: "Nauka" Publishing House, 1971, pp. 117-140.

THE MARRIAGE MARKET

A study was made of the personal advertisements for marriage partners submitted in 1980 to the Lithuanian monthly journal Sheima [The Family]. The advertisements revealed a kind of " 'market' in human destinies, hopes and disappointments,... In using the term 'marriage market,' we are trying not so much to construct a metaphor as to be literal. We are talking of a rather non-traditional type of contact between men and women before marriage which actually is reminiscent of supply-and-demand relations. In the matrimonial advertisements, He and She appear before each other not as 'destined ones,' picked out by fate itself to spend their lives together, but as objects of mutual choice -- abstract (for the time being) bearers of certain useful qualities, each of which has its price."

Twenty-two percent of the advertisements considered in the study were submitted by men. (By the 1979 Census, there were 11 unmarried women for every 10 unmarried men between the ages of 30 and 34; 14 women for every 10 men between 35 and 39; 19.4 women for every 10 men between 40 and 44; and, in the older age groups, the excess of unmarried women rose sharply. Only a small part of this disproportion is due to the greater life expectancy of women. The difference between the ages of men and women at marriage is more important: thus, below 30 there are more unmarried men, and above 30, more unmarried women. Most of those who submitted advertisements were no longer young: the median age for female advertisers was 35 and for males 40.

Analysis showed that age was an important "exchange value" on the Sheima marriage market. That is, the more unfavorable the situation of a single woman was, in her own estimation, the more willing she was to accept an older man as a prospective husband. Only 9% of the women advertisers stipulated that the prospective husband should be of the same age as themselves, while 24% were willing to accept a man 6-10 or more years older. A rather large proportion of the advertisers had "higher education" -- that is to say, the equivalent of college or graduate school — and specialized secondary education, and this proportion was higher among women than among men. According to data from 1979, there were more women than men with higher or specialized secondary education in all age groups up to 60. Nevertheless, many women stipulated that their prospective husband's educational level should not be lower than theirs.

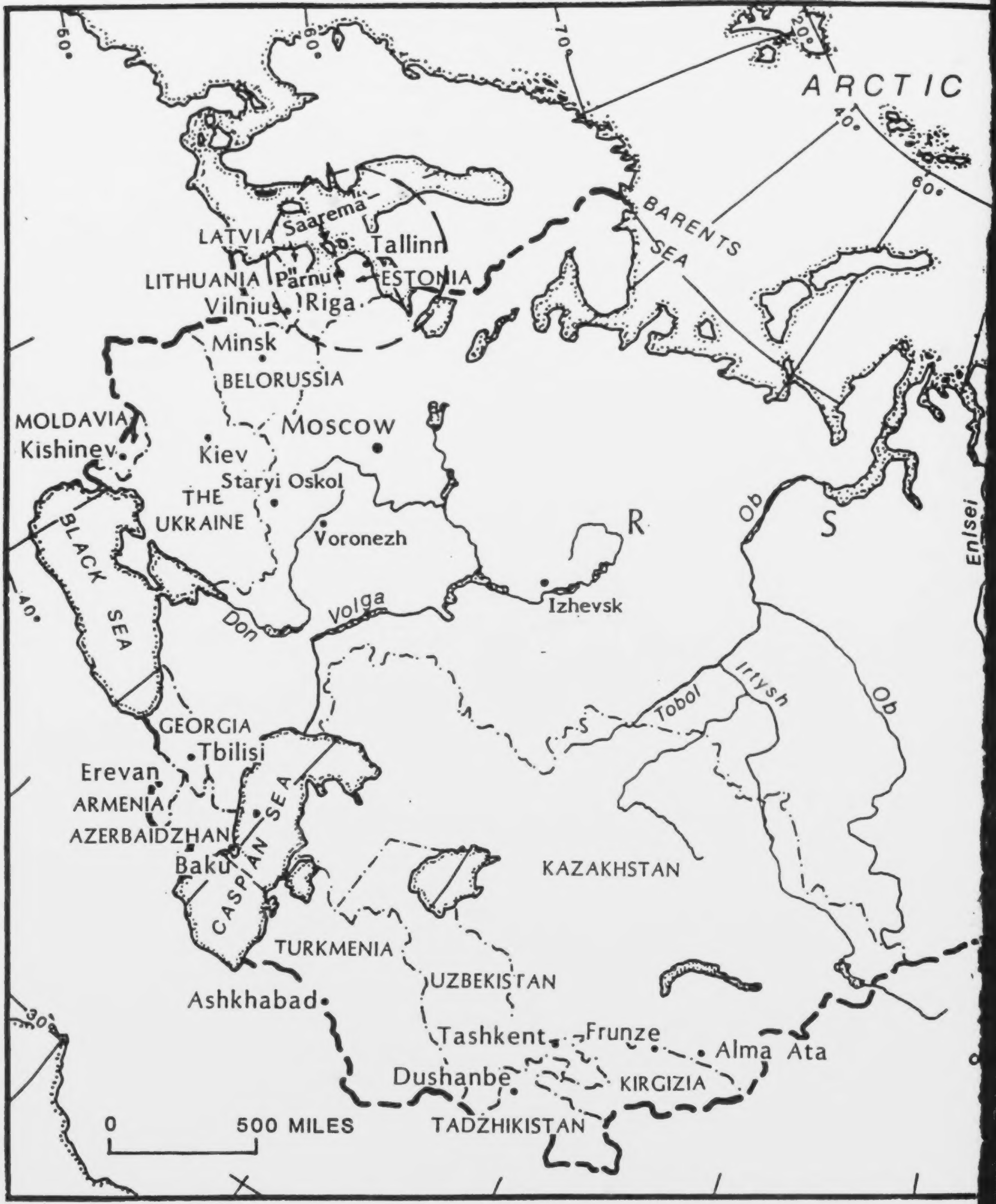
Tables accompanying the report show that willingness to accept an older man is an attractive feature in a woman (both women and men were ranked by the number of replies received to their advertisements). On the other hand, women were more attracted to men who did not state an age preference. The presence of children was a disadvantageous factor in the marriage market, and sons were more of a disadvantage than daughters. The possession of an apartment was a positive factor. Height was a strongly differentiating factor, tall women being at a disadvantage, while tall men had an advantage.

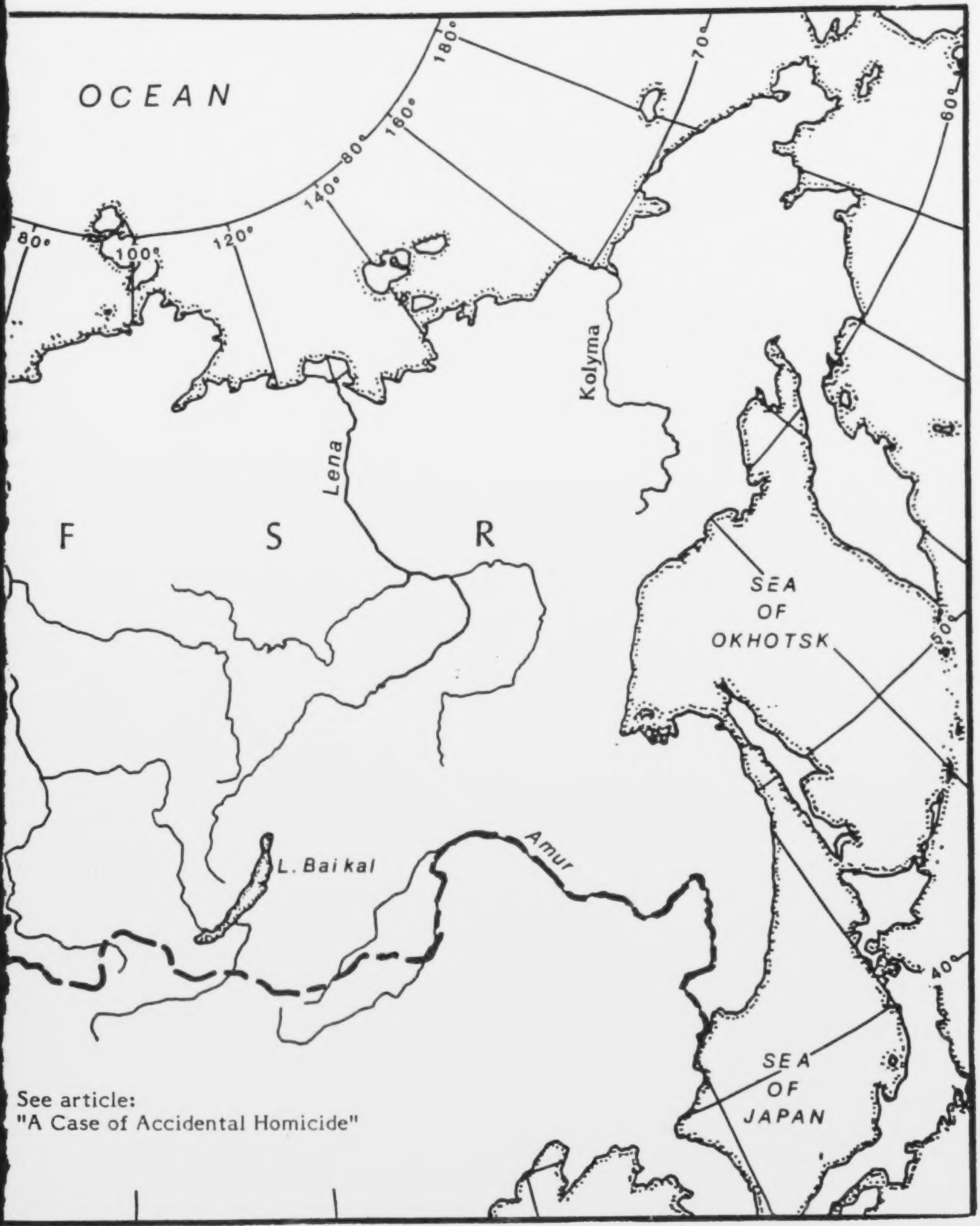
Finally, many advertisers complained (quite naturally) of the great difficulty of "summing themselves up" in ten lines or less. For example, here is one advertisement as it was sent in:

"I am 53. Nature has given me good health, the gift of looking much younger than my age, and a sympathetic character. But happiness -- that's at the whim of fate. It doesn't exist without a devoted friend and defender. I am a widow. My children are grown up and have their own families. I have a secondary technical education as a building engineer. My height is 1.70 meters (approximately 5' 9"). My figure is good, and my hair is its natural auburn color. I have a strong sense of justice but a gentle and yielding character. I live in a modest

Continued on page 13

11


60°
60°
70°
20°
ARCTIC
40°
60°
BARENTS SEA
Saarema
LATVIA
Tallinn
LITHUANIA
Pärnu
ESTONIA
Vilnius
Riga
Minsk
BELORUSSIA
MOLDAVIA
Kishinev
Moscow
Kiev
Staryi Oskol
THE UKRAINE
Voronezh
R
S
Ob
Enisei
BLACK SEA
40°
Don
Volga
Izhevsk
Irtysh
Tobol
Ob
GEORGIA
Tbilisi
Erevan
ARMENIA
AZERBAIDZHAN
Baku
CASPIAN SEA
KAZAKHSTAN
TURKMENIA
UZBEKISTAN
Ashkhabad
30°
Tashkent
Frunze
Alma Ata
Dushanbe
KIRGIZIA
TADZHIKISTAN
0
500 MILES


OCEAN
180°
70°
60°
160°
80°
140°
120°
100°
80°
Kolyma
Lena
F
S
R
SEA
OF
OKHOTSK
50°
L. Baikal
Amur
40°
SEA
OF
JAPAN

See article:
"A Case of Accidental Homicide"

Continued from page 10

one-room apartment. I love nature, sports (I used to be athletic), music, art and other things in moderation, but most of all I am a 'homebody.' If you are destined by fate to do so, then reply, my modern knight, not over 65, gifted with inner charm -- kindness, integrity, a reasonable view of the world, and civilized behavior; single, without involvements, attentive, with warmth of soul, desiring to receive these qualities and to respond in kind."

Here is how this advertisement appeared in the magazine: "Woman of 53, height 170 cm., educated widow, with an apartment in a large city, wishes to meet man not over 65." And here is an example of a more individualized advertisement, as it was published: "Prepossessing eight-year-old boy and his charming mother would be glad to meet a noble preceptor and protector, tall, 33-37 years of age." These advertisements are examined with great care by readers, who try to establish the "full text" -- that is, what the advertiser doesn't say. For example, the male author of one advertisement was rejected as "an obvious pain in the neck," another, because he "writes too much about himself," a third because he "brags too much," a fourth for being "capricious," and a fifth for making "too many demands on her."

[We wonder what these ladies would make of the sometimes flowery 'personals' which appear on the back pages of some Western magazines. It seems clear that the idea of advertising for mates is still rather new to Soviet people, but the authors expect the idea's popularity to increase. There is an important point here: the organized social activities in Soviet cities -- dances, "evenings," club meetings, and excursions of various kind -- are mainly aimed at young people, and just as in many other places, there is a shortage of legitimate ways to meet potential mates or even potential friends.]

V. A. Gaidis, S. S. Rapoport, and D. P. Tureikite, "Brachnye ob"iavleniia: Nekotorye rezul'taty eksperimenta zhurnala 'Sheima,'" ["Matrimonial advertisements: Some results of an experiment by the journal Sheima"], Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 1985, No. 4, pp. 66-75.

A CASE OF ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE

[Material in English on Soviet legal procedure is hard to come by, and what little is available tends to be either highly technical and abstruse, or focussed on political cases, highly sensational, and atypical of what happens to the ordinary Soviet citizen who is accused of a non-political crime. Therefore, the following case is of considerable interest.]

The case occurred in Estonia, on the island of Saarema, in the Baltic. It involved two young construction workers, Aarne and Heino [the names were changed by the Soviet author, and we omit the surnames here.] Heino was also a rock musician who played in the evenings with his group in a popular restaurant frequented both by local people and by tourists from other parts of the Soviet Union. Aarne was a convivial type with a weakness for liquor and for spending money. Heino was reserved and polite and didn't drink at all. Aarne was married and had two children; Heino was single. They knew each other only vaguely, if at all. On the particular evening in question, Aarne had come to the restaurant bringing with him only two rubles and had borrowed another ten from an acquaintance in order to drink more. After the last break in the music, Heino came to the bar and bought a bottle of vodka to take out "for his friends." Aarne was standing next to him and apparently took the bottle and hid it on the floor behind the leg of the table where he was sitting. His friends agree that he would never have done this sober. Heino asked him politely whether he had accidentally taken the bottle, although he knew that it was no accident and could see after a moment where it was. Aarne rudely told him: "Get away from me." Heino reached down to take the bottle and Aarne pushed him roughly, so that he moved toward the neighboring table. At this point, the accounts of witnesses diverge. Two people saw Aarne take hold of Heino's jacket and shake him, and two other people saw Heino strike out wildly and hit Aarne in the face. One witness definitely heard the sound of the blow. Aarne fell to the floor and Heino, without taking the bottle, went back to the bandstand to play the last set. The bar was not visible from the bandstand. After twenty minutes, someone came to Heino and told him that Aarne was in bad shape. The paramedics were called, but by the time they arrived, Aarne was dead.

On June 8, 1981, Heino was convicted in the local court of inflicting severe bodily injury leading to the death of the victim, and was sentenced to five years under a strict regime in a penal labor camp, and ordered to pay the victim's widow a lump sum as well as monthly payments for each of the children until they reached legal age (18). Heino's lawyer appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR, and on July 2, the verdict was set aside on the grounds that the local court should have inquired not only into what happened but also into the motives of the accused and into his ability to foresee the consequences of his action. For instance: had Heino tried to threaten Aarne or to take the bottle by force, or to punish the offender? No; Heino had spoken politely, and even in a friendly way, and had not even tried to reply when pushed. He had used force only when Aarne grabbed his jacket. The medical evidence showed that Aarne's death was due to "an extremely rare phenomenon," which Heino could not have foreseen [but the author does not say what this phenomenon was].

On May 13, 1982, the case was heard for the second time in the People's Court of Pärnu, a larger town on the mainland. Heino was given a two-year suspended sentence with obligatory labor. When asked whether he considered himself guilty, he answered firmly: "No."

The verdict was again appealed to the Estonian Supreme Court, and was left unaltered by the Criminal Panel of this court. However, the Chairman of the Court entered a protest on his own initiative, following which the Presidium of the Court reconsidered the case and placed it under Article 104 of the Estonian Criminal Code which covers homicide due to the excessive use of force in self-defense. Heino was given a suspended sentence of one year in prison with obligatory labor.

The Supreme Court of the USSR, acting in a supervisory capacity [that is, on its own initiative, and not on an appeal by either party], overturned the verdict and quashed the case, on the grounds that Heino's actions had not been criminal and that his measures of self-defense had been within the limits allowed by law. The Soviet reporter says that while this final result was probably fair as far as Heino was concerned, it left Aarne's widow with two young children and without means of support other than her own small salary as a bookkeeper.

A lawyer's opinion following the report tells us that less than a third of all sentences imposed by lower courts are appealed, and that less than one sixth of these appeals have an objective basis and are even partially successful. In this case, however, both the appeals process and the supervisory process came into play.

[The most striking aspect of this case is the elaborate and time-consuming procedure for appeal and review which it reveals. Before it was finished, the case was heard five times in courts on four different levels. We don't know in detail how this compares with what would happen in the United States, but it seems unlikely that a relatively minor case which doesn't seem to present any important points of law would get this much attention from the American courts. It's also worth noting that while courts in the Anglo-American tradition are in a sense passive instruments -- that is, they have to wait until cases are brought to them, and then render their decisions -- Soviet courts, at least in certain cases, can take "supervisory jurisdiction," and act on their own initiative. At the same time, their powers are more limited than those of our courts: the judiciary under the Soviet system is not an independent branch of government, and the courts, in principle, can only decide whether a law has been properly applied in a particular case, and not (as an American appellate court can do) whether it should have been on the books in the first place. For instance, in the case discussed here, the question was whether Heino's action, regardless of its consequences, fell within the limits of legitimate self-defense. In other words, the basic issue was one of fact rather than one of law.

[The case also shows that someone who kills or disables another person is, under Soviet law, liable in a civil as well as a criminal sense. The guilty party must pay a set sum to support or compensate the victim and the survivors. This is an idea which is just beginning to be discussed in the United States. It remains highly controversial, and is supported largely (although not entirely) by people whose politics are conservative.]

S. Aleksandrovich, "Neraskuporennaia butylka" ["The unopened bottle"], Chelovek i zakon [Man and the Law], 1985, No. 10, pp. 53-62.

* * *

DORMITORIES

Staryi Oskol (the name means "Old Splinter") is a fast-growing industrial town in the Black Earth country around Belgorod. The population is now 150,000. The main industries are metallurgy and iron mining. There are two building projects under the patronage of the Komsomol [Communist Youth Organization] (which means that workers are sent there by the Komsomol from all parts of the country). The bulk of the population is young and single and lives in dormitories (male or female, but not coeducational). The average age of dormitory residents is 28. The dormitories sound pretty depressing since they lack some of the facilities that they should have such as lounges, cafeterias, libraries, laundries, and so forth, which have to be set up in areas originally intended as living quarters. One inspection committee reported of a dormitory that the wall paper was peeling, the walls were sweating, the halls were poorly lit, and the linoleum and walls were a terrible gray color, the elevators frequently don't work, ventilation is poor, the doors and windows have cracks, the water pipes are noisy, and the plumbing is antiquated. However, the main problem from the point of view of those living there is a social one. At the entrances to all dormitories there are booths for watchmen which are decorated by big placards saying: "Visiting permitted from 6-10 P.M. weekdays and from 4-10 P.M. on weekends. Visitors must leave I.D. with watchman, and residents must leave an entry permit." The problem is that the average age of 28 conceals the fact that some residents are 18 and younger and others are 38 and older. It's natural that people of 18 and younger should expect some supervision of their social lives. But how are people of around 40 who have passed through, as the saying goes "fire, water, and divorce," going to react to something like this? After all, it's not all that easy for some of them to break out of their single state. In addition, there are complaints of rudeness and arbitrariness by some of the watchmen.

"What is the result of all this? Not in the rule book, but in life? Brazen men quite often get into the women's dormitories at times when they aren't supposed to -- through the windows, through the attics, through the balconies, and who knows how else. Some of them even get in under conditions where they can no longer walk, having overcome their diffidence with a fairly good dose of alcohol. Sober but ardent lovers also get in despite the furious struggle against them by the management, the police, and the volunteer detachments. [These detachments are recruited from the Komsomol and trade union membership to help the regular police with routine tasks.]

"With the drunks, hooligans, and rowdies, there's no real problem. They are taken in hand and bundled into the drunk tank.... The real problem is that because of these individuals -- and they are isolated cases -- the population of the women's dormitories is placed under guard to defend it from unwanted guests. As for the sober but ardent lovers, in this regard, everything is dramatically not clear, and sometimes tragically complicated. There is no sadder story in the world than that of the Romeo and Juliet whom a determined management, breaking through the door, found alone in one of the rooms at an improper time. Juliet is evicted for immoral behavior, and goes to live where there are no rules, no management, and no supervisors.... But let's be honest: is morality improved by this?" Something has to be done. The residents of the men's dorm want the watchmen removed and the rules for admission of guests changed. Many residents think that they should organize their own internal security service, including the anti-drunkenness campaign and health and housekeeping service. At the present time there are no general rules for how one should live and behave in a dormitory, the commentator thinks that there should be something more than a sign on the wall which says "A clean floor is like your face," "Don't sit on the bedspread," and the like.

The housing shortage is so extreme that the principle that the dormitories should be occupied only by people working in the enterprises to which they belong is often violated. Many of the residents in the dormitories are store employees, teachers, medical workers, or policemen. In one of the dormitories only a little over a third are actually workers in the factory which has formal jurisdiction over the facility.

Although about a third of the Komsomol members in the town are dormitory residents, the Komsomol and the other party organs are very slow to consider changes and reach decisions upon them. The problem here is not isolated: it extends to hundreds of thousand of people, and perhaps even millions, on the scale of the country as a whole.

[In this story we find one of the important differences between life in the Soviet Union and in other places. Very rapid industrial development, such as is going on in the Soviet Union not only in Siberia, but as here, in the center of European Russia, requires rapid and efficient solution of the housing problem. In many cases, dormitories seem to be the obvious answer, and they are accepted by most people as a normal way to live at a certain stage of their careers. But at the same time people insist on a degree of control over their own lives.]

M. DUBKOV, "Obshchezhitie" ["The Dormitory"], Izvestiia, 22/VI/85: 2.

HOW DO SOVIET YOUNG PEOPLE AMUSE THEMSELVES?

How Soviet young people spend their time — whether their minds and morals are being developed as they grow -- is the topic of much Soviet commentary. Literaturnaia gazeta [The Literary Newspaper] sent out a questionnaire to ordinary schoolchildren, asking what movies they liked best, and if a movie were made of their lives, what it would have in it. Most of the titles mentioned are unfamiliar to us, but it seems that making movies for children and adolescents is a booming business. However, one director who is also an actor commented that there is very little science in the production of these films: "... the concept is presently on the level of the discovery that April occurs in April!" The largest studio is the Gorky Central Studio for Children's and Adolescents' Films, and they are reproached for the general assumption that their young audience wishes only to be entertained; adventure and detective stories are very big n the list of this studio's productions. The ung people themselves say that nmakers don't need to be afraid to tell m about life as it really is.

When asked what a film about her life would be like, one anonymous 16-year-old said "it would be a film about friendship with my girlfriend and two of my former classmates, about my girlfriend's betrayal, about my loneliness which sometimes is blotted out by books, about how no one understands me or wants to understand me, about the indifferent attitude toward me that my relatives have except for my sister, about my athletic life, about the improbable and even dangerous situations into which I am thrown." Another 16-year-old girl, Kadri-Rutt Allik, declared that a wise filmmaker would see how from the first grade onward she had been maturing into a position of leadership, struggling with the boys, who then behaved rudely; how she was rejected and lost her leadership position and transferred to another school. A 17-year-old boy, studying in a professional-technical school, said that no films would be made about him, and if they were, they would never see the light of day because his contemporaries would have difficulty understanding and adults didn't want to overcome these difficulties. Another 17-year-old boy, also in a professional-technical school, said that a movie of his life would be one fight after another because he was always fighting, "and if you can't who needs you?"

A prize-winning Soviet composer, Mikael Tariverdiev, also laments the condescencion towards young people and comments that television is not being used as well as it might be to broadcast musical material. For instance, there is a rock opera by A. Rybnikov and Andre Voznesenskii [a well known poet] called "Iunona i Avos'" ["Juno and Perhaps"] which has been running for more than three years at the Komsomol Theater in Leningrad, and people are still lined up around the block for tickets. The composer asks why this can't be filmed for television and broadcast. He also asks whether there is such a thing as "youth music" -- apart from rock, pop, rhythm, and variety music in general, which if they are any good, are well received by people of any age. "By applying this 'term' to music in general, we as it were cut off young people from everything which mankind has created and is now creating in the field of the highest musical culture. We imply that Bach, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovskii, and Prokofiev have outlived their time. One doesn't want to speak too harshly, but this can only be called uncivilized.

"More than this, it's not true! Try to get into any show at the Moscow Chamber Musical Theater and you'll find both the lobby and the hall itself packed with young people." The same goes for V. Spivakov's group "Moscow Virtuosi." Most of the spectators at the recent International Ballet Competition were young people, but the mass media did a very poor job of covering this.

[Tariverdiev's point, although not explicitly stated, is that television creates popular taste rather than simply reflecting it, and that there is another region of taste to which television pays no attention. Does this sound familiar? Over here, people blame this on commercial sponsorship and the search for the big audience. What is the reason for it where there are no commercials, and where the state supposedly can do whatever it wants?]

"Poidem v kino?" ["Shall We Go to the Movies"], Literaturnaia gazeta, 14/VIII/85: 8.
M. TARIVERDIEV, "Muzyka, TV i my" ["Music, TV and Us"], Izvestiia, 25/VI/85: 3.

REFRESHER COURSES FOR PHYSICIANS

[Requalification of physicians is extremely frequent in the US, because every medical specialist must be retrained at least once to keep up with advances in medicine and to acquire the desired specialty.]

A recent study of 10,000 physicians taking refresher courses revealed interesting data on the occupational, demographic and sexual distribution of Soviet physicians: 62.6% were women, although men predominated among surgeons, traumatologists and orthopedists, pathological anatomists, and anesthesiologists. The majority of them were working in the RSFSR, and only 4.7% in Central Asia, for example. Most of them were employed in Oblast centers, the capitals of the Republics, and other cities, with only a little more than a quarter coming from rural areas. The fact that 55.8% of administrators were male lends some support to the argument by some Western students of the status of women in the USSR that women physicians are a majority in primarily low-prestige branches of medicine. Psychiatry, as suggested by our article on the crisis center in Moscow in our last issue, is beginning to be a more popular specialty than it has been in the recent past. In this sample, 55.8% of the psychiatrists were men, and only 17.5% had been employed more than 20 years; 16% were under 30 years of age, and only 11% were over 50.

[During the late 1920s and 1930s, psychoanalysis and Western psychiatry in general were repressed in the Soviet Union. James L. Rice suggests that discussions of Freudianism in the Soviet Union were subordinated to general anti-religious propaganda. In our next issue, we will provide more details on Freudianism and religion.]

Only 39.8% of the psychiatrists were taking refresher courses for the first time; 3% had done it five or more times. Out of the 10,000 physicians, only 290 worked in institutions rendering emergency services, and the authors of the study call this clearly inadequate in view of recent directives from the USSR Ministry of Health on measures for improving the system of training and specialization for physicians providing direct service to the public.

KHMYROV, A.B., N.A. BEDEROVA, and G.V. LOSEV, "Demograficheskaia i professional'naia kharakertistika vrachei, obuchavshikhsiia v institutakh usovershenstvovaniia," [Demographic and professional characteristics of physicians studying in postgraduate training institutes"] Sovetskoe zdravookhranenie [Soviet Public Health], 1985, No. 12, pp. 32-35; James L. Rice, "Russian Stereotypes in the Freud-Jung Correspondence," Slavic Review, 1982, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 32-33, especially footnote 51.

THE DISABLED IN THE SOVIET UNION

[Stephen and Ethel Dunn, The Station Relay's Contributing Editors, have a long-standing professional and personal interest in the situation of the disabled in the Soviet Union. In 1985, they attended a conference at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, where they presented a paper on the daily life of the disabled in the Soviet Union. Although the conference tried to stay clear of political issues, the existence, extent and character of a disabled rights movement in the USSR was a topic for heated debate. One issue was the widely-held opinion that Soviet media ignore the disabled, a situation the Dunns held was not unique to the Soviet Union. Another issue was the repression of disabled rights activists, among whom was Genadii Gus'kov, the hero of this sketch, written by Elena Rzhevskaia, and printed in Literaturnaia gazeta [The Literary Newspaper] (14/VIII/74: 12), a mass-circulation weekly devoted to the literary scene and, as Rzhevskaia notes, to a wide range of contemporary social issues. Even though, by its publication date, Rzhevskaia's sketch must be classified as a historical document, we present it now in order to set the stage for the presentation of more current data. The sketch was preceded by editorial comment from Literaturnaia gazeta, which we have placed within quotation marks.]

"That which you have lost doesn't matter: what is important is what you still have." These words belong to an old doctor, the founder of the Olympic Games for the Handicapped, Ludwig Huttman.

"What's important is what you still have .... This thought is, if you wish, the most important in the approach to the problem of gainful employment of the handicapped -- the drawing out of their capabilities, and the creation of appropriate working conditions.

"Our state does not spare funds in order to make the fate of people who have fallen into misfortune easier, to make their lives maximally useful for society. In the RSFSR alone [the largest republic in the Soviet Union] over the period of 1971-1973, 132.5 million rubles were assigned for the building of boarding schools and homes for the aged and handicapped. In the next few years it is planned to increase significantly the monies assigned for these goals. The Ministry of Social Security of the RSFSR told us that new boarding schools and homes were built according to models which were intended to make the conditions of life in them like home conditions.

"The writer Elena Rzhevskaia, on assignment from the Editorial Board [of *Literature gazeta*], became acquainted with conditions in the home and boarding schools, and in our view, she raises important questions connected with introducing the handicapped to socially useful activity."

Ten days ago when I approached the boarding schools for the first time I was overcome with a shyness about what I was going to see. "Handicapped from childhood" was for me a previously unknown combination of words and this term is in official use. Childhood suddenly became as it were one of those concepts like war, accident, illness.

And here I'm going away for the last time. Here I met people of rare spiritual refinement, intellect, ethical exactitude.

This was in the Voronezh Boarding Facility #1 for the aged and the handicapped. I will return to it later but first I have to tell you something.

Those who have suffered a severe illness in childhood or injury or suffer from a physical handicap from birth, become invalids *de jure*, at the age of sixteen, if they have not been cured in special boarding schools for children and in sanataria, and are returned to their families. Sixteen-year-olds who cannot be returned to their families are sent to boarding homes for the aged and handicapped.

When you visit any such home undoubtedly you sense the incongruity of placing together aged people and those who, having suffered a serious physical injury, are spending their youth and growing into maturity here, and who are trying to find their place in life and, (accordingly) seek support in work and study. The administration of this boarding facility essentially faces two different and in many ways contradictory tasks.

An understanding of this is expressed in a decision of the Ministry of Social Security of the RSFSR to create boarding schools and homes for young people. It was adopted in 1968, but was not, however, implemented, since in the Ministry at that time another point of view prevailed: "It is harmful for young people to live without old people." It was thought that this was decreed on the basis of the Voronezh Boarding Facility #1 which (so the Ministry says) was at one time assigned to young people. But I was there and I know that it was never assigned to them. Theoretical computations, based on mythical experience, are bankrupt.

In fact this living together is bad for both of them. Excitement, noise, music which accompanies young people, is burdensome for people of advanced age. Some need quiet, and for others it is unbearable. But this is not all. The feebleness of old age and the physical inability of young people full of energy and various strivings and vital interests are very dissimilar. To confine old people and young handicapped people under one roof and sometimes in the same wards simply because both need constant care, is, in my view, inadmissible. In these conditions a person already deprived by physical disability quickly falls into despair, depression, indifference, abandons hope of somehow arranging his life there and his future. The "Resolution on Homes and Boarding Schools" considers the situation of aged people. And young handicapped people are forced to live according to a charter for the aged.

And this means that they cannot satisfy the pressing need to work which many of them feel. Here there is no concept of "productive labor," only work therapy and helping in the kitchen, or the kitchen garden. "The provided for," as the residents of the boarding schools are officially called, sometimes make string shopping bags, or knit socks, and for some clever but spiritually deaf and illiterate administrators, they are engaged in preparing grave wreaths in line with that same work therapy.

* * *

Voronezh Boarding Home #1 is the best in the Oblast. It is situated in a fruit orchard on the banks of a river next to a forest, on the very edge of a large industrial city. The young handicapped people of this boarding school do not want to vegetate in an "almshouse." They have made an interesting beginning, which was what brought me here. Five years ago they created an industrial workshop here. First they assembled switches for the Voronezh Plastics factory. Then they mastered new more complicated types of products. The shop received positive responses and large orders.

The corner ward on the first floor where the most severely handicapped, old people and bedridden invalids were housed was reoutfitted into an industrial shop. Some of the workers could not dress themselves without the help of attendants and could not get from their bed to a wheelchair. But wheeled here to the job they worked with tireless enthusiasm. Therefore, it's impossible to overestimate everything that was brought into their lives by the shop. Both faith in themselves and their capabilites, communion with comrades, connections with the external world, the self-esteem of people who know their usefulness to society and who are freed from the yoke of dependency. Now they can get with their wages whatever they like. And yet it wasn't so very long ago that in order to send a completed assignment to the correspondence institute it was necessary to ask the office and request a stamp also.

Opposite the shop is the door to the ward where the technical director lives, an invalid of the first group [the most severely handicapped], Gennadii Gus'kov. The shop owes its existence in large measure to his rare energy, engineering inventiveness, lively public-spirited temperament, and personal charm.

The son of a Volga River captain, he contracted poliomylitis when he was eight years old; his legs and arms are immobile -- only the fingers of his left hand can still move. And from that time instead of the world of the river with its eternal movement, instead of the floating housebarge of the first years of his life, he had the rigidity of hospital and boarding-school walls. But he is still addicted to the spontaneity of movement, and his book published by the Znanie publishing house [a very large technical, popular science and aesthetic literature publishing house] is devoted to motors.

A naturally gifted and indominable spirit gave him such unimaginable dynamism that he appears now on the streets of Voronezh, driving with the fingers of his left hand a small automobile he constructed, now in Izhevsk at the factory, where his inventions are realized, now at the Ministry about the matter of introducing his invention for a wheelchair for the handicapped which climbs stairs. And yet it was not so long ago that he, according to the existing order, was refused admittance to a technical institution of higher education, and only with the permission of the Minister was he allowed to take the exams according to the generally accepted rules.

Recently Gennadii traveled to Moscow on the shop's business, shattering by his appearance the stereotyped ideas about a bedridden invalid. Among some people this called forth enthusiasm, among others sharp displeasure at the meeting. The fact is that in some departments where Gennadii Gus'kov slips in with the help of a primitive cart it is known to be decided that from handicapped people who are kept in boarding schools, not to speak of the bedridden ones, one should not expect any sort of "return." The bedridden should be bedridden and not pester people and make noise and demands!

But a certain problem exists! The state spends quite significant sums on the needs of social security, and these sums should be spent competently and efficiently.

The "Voronezh Invalid" (VOIN) received more than three hundred petitions from handicapped persons living with their families with requests to take them on as homebound craftsmen. And there already is an agreement with the director of the boarding school that for their time of study in the shop "alien" handicapped people will be accepted in residence. Consequently, production will increase. There are orders ahead, there are plans to master new production.

I am sitting in Gennadii Gus'kov's room where in the evening young inventors -- Voronezh students -- come for consultation. Handicapped people living in the city come to discuss their affairs, to play chess, to read poems. After hours the workforce of VOIN disperses. One hears beyond the walls the sound of a spoon on a glass calling the attendant .... But here in Gus'kov's room they are dreaming about how the growing shop will grow into a large enterprise with residential facilities for handicapped people, with various shops where each person can find his place. And then Khel'vi Khiakkelia, who has a university education, can find a job corresponding to her capabilities. And the gifted Katia Smirnova, who broke her spine, can develop her ability in the field of artistic crafts.

But -- having demonstrated its viability and having brought no small income to the boarding school, the shop just might perish. It arose and exists thanks to such of its friends as the Chief of the Department of Industry of the Voronezh Oblast Committee of the Communist Party, A.V. Chubrov, Candidate of Technical Sciences A.L. Koloidenko, the Director of the factory S.N. Bogomolov, and workers at this factory -- the Chief of Production L.F. Abakumov, and the designer N.N. Viriasov. But like any production unit, the shop cannot function normally, depending on the testimonials of some to overcome deafness, lack of interest, and lack of faith on the part of others. It needs to come in out of its extra-social existence. In order to enter into business relationships with customers, with those who provide raw materials, and with the Design Bureau, the shop and its handicapped workers have to have a clearly defined legal position.

And here there arises an insuperable barrier -- the "Resolution on Homes and Boarding Schools", which asserts that "the provided for" have to be satisfied with work therapy alone.

* * *

This article was not yet finished when letters began to arrive for me in the Editorial Office from various cities and obscure villages in the USSR. "The grapevine" had informed interested parties the Literaturnaia gazeta was writing an article on a humanitarian theme traditional for it.

The authors of these letters, as with the basic mass of handicapped people, live either with their families or alone.

The family is by no means always in the best position to care for handicapped people in the best possible way, and besides everyone has a job. The person in this position often feels himself a burden and is in a conflict situation in the family, on whom, if he is handicapped from childhood, he depends materially. In the majority of cases the handicapped person has been trained for no suitable profession, and has not been drawn into the work process, and this circumstance intensifies the tragic element in his position. There's no possibility of getting into a home for handicapped people and the prospect of being in such a home with the aged is for a young person a cheerless one. And in cases in which the parents are committed and dedicated to the care of their crippled child, both he and they are tormented with anxiety for the future, which will inevitably separate them, as the parents age, breaking up their lives.

The most acutely painful question for all of us, the handicapped people write, is the lack of opportunity to engage in socially useful activity.

Here are lines from various letters received: We are in the position of parasites. We bear this as a brand, as a mark of shame. Work is my convalescence, my happiness. I experience enormous happiness when I am of use to my beloved country. How many handicapped people from the ages of 18 to 45 ask themselves: where is my place in life? Inactivity is a great sorrow. You only get one life and there won't be a second. Something has to be done so that there will be a place for us in the middle of things and not in carriages for the wounded....

In spite of the universal need for laborers, homebound labor is at present little used; it is extremely difficult to find jobs for the handicapped. But paradoxically if you lack a hand or even both hands and are in addition blind, you can be sure that you will be suitably cared for and that work will be found for you. The All-Russian Society for the Blind (VOS) and the Society for the Deaf (VOG) see as their main task allowing a person to work. In Voronezh, blind people are successfully employed who do not have either one or both hands. There is a special scientific research institute which studies the optimal procedures for their work. The Society studies, builds homes for its members, supports them materially, rewards those who study in institutes, pays them a stipend and wages for readers, provides them with tape recorders, and does much much more to aid the blind and not only those who are blind. In Voronezh, for example, VOS is building the oblast eye hospital out of its own funds .

It is quite evident that handicapped people need an organization similar to VOS and VOG. Social security agencies alone are not competent to solve this problem. In the life of a handicapped person there is nothing of secondary importance. Several steps leading from the home in which he lives can cut him off from the external world. And the lack of suitably modified items in everyday use or specially made clothing ... and the levered wheel chair which only a normal person can use...

* * *

Formerly society saw its duty to the handicapped person only in caring for him. But in the 1920s in our country a progressive humanitarian idea was born -- to return the handicapped person to society, to restore his personal and social status. This idea gained currency and developed abroad. The system of activity necessary for its existence, which includes a multiplicity of aspects, is called in the language of specialists "rehabilitation of the handicapped." In recent years the progressive-spirited public of many countries have had in mind a complex set of questions connected with it. For in spite of the fact that medicine has learned to avert certain diseases, for example poliomylitis, scientific prognoses do not promise a decrease in the numbers of the disabled. How many people are crippled by one automobile accident alone! And rising industrial accidents .... Throughout the whole world disability is becoming one of the most pressing problems.

Scientists think that 80% of the handicapped can be returned to active life. Special centers should be created for this, where in the process of rehabilitative treatment and prosthetic outfitting, the inclination and gifts of the patients would manifest themselves and the possibility of making them able to work would be explored. There must be in these centers shops which have many specialties. And the handicapped should study not, as is done at present, shoe repair or primitive bookkeeping, but electronics, precision mechanics, artistic crafts. For the physically disabled person completely preserves his intellect and he can master a complicated advanced profession which demands a smaller expenditure of physical labor. And in addition, finding him a job is made easier.

And as often happens a moral approach to the problem turns out to be also economical. The necessary expenditures are recouped many times over by people who have been returned to work.

One of the first stages on the road to implementing the complex tasks of rehabilitation, it seems to me, should be the creation of homes and boarding schools for young people outfitted with a variety of shops and a network of producing living facilities paid for by working handicapped people.

I write these lines thinking of the Voronezh handicapped people's shop, which they advisedly called "experimental." There are in it in embryo the elements of what is contained in the idea of returning the disabled to the work collective.

* * *

I was told that Voronezh school children bought a handicapped person an automobile with money they got for collecting metal. They said that hundreds of kids took part in this enterprise .... It seems to me that they at the same time did a good job of self-education in the spirit of civic pride, collective aid, personal participation and responsiveness.

Literature acquaints us with the famous names of those possessing talent and the strength of spirit of the handicapped, who, with steadfastness worthy of the greatest respect, against all adversities, have been able to be useful to people.

They, unquestionably, are worthy of admiration. Of course, not every handicapped person can count on admiration but active assistance is the right of each. We should say to the handicapped person: you are a citizen of our society and we are obliged to give you a profession and to create conditions which will help you to live and work actively.

Translated by Ethel Dunn, Highgate Road Social Science Research Station, Berkeley, California.

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The Station logo, at left, is one version of the ancient Slavic Tree of Life

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The Station Relay

Facts and views on daily life in the Soviet Union

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* * *

From the Editors:

Our cover this issue is by Helen Mardukhaev, a thirteen-year-old girl who was born in Baku, Azerbaidzhan, USSR. Her dancing Georgian perhaps has a partner in our dancing bear, and he comes from the same Republic as the Abkhasians.

Our Russian-speaking-and-reading secretary, Ariane Trélaün, thought we needed a positive accompaniment to the story about dormitories in the last issue of The Station Relay, so she brought in the following front-page story from Pravda (11/II/86: 1): Members of the Communist Youth Organization (Komsomol) at the radio factory in Ustinov have built the first youth center in Udmurtiia. It seems that the factory's dormitory had a dining hall but no club or other cultural facilities. Since there was a cafe nearby, the Komsomols plastered and repainted the dining hall and outfitted it for music, lectures, movies, and dancing. This item, like the article in this issue on large families, probably also suggests the "style" that the Soviet regime would like to see more prevalent.

Readers who liked our informal precis of Viktor Il'in's "My Village of Rechnoe" can now read the whole translation in Soviet Anthroplogy and Archeology 1985-86, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, pp. 3-46. If your library doesn't have the publication, we are allowed to make copies for you.

Paula Garb's From Childhood to Centenarian, reviewed in this issue, will be available in paperback later this year. Readers who subscribe to a second year of The Station Relay are eligible for a 20% discount on the selling price of $8.00.

Sincerely,

The Editors

BOOK REVIEW: PAULA GARB'S FROM CHILDHOOD TO CENTENARIAN

This book, published in English in the Soviet Union in 1984, is a study of the mountain people of the Abkhazian ASSR, in the northwestern corner of the Transcaucasian region, concentrating on the reasons for their unusual longevity: "... in 1970, the total population in Transcaucasia ... accounted for seven percent of the Soviet population, but it boasted 16 percent of all people over 90, and 35 percent of those over 100 living in the USSR. ... [T]he Abkhasians ... have twice as many people over 90 as do the Georgians." The Abkhasians are not only long-lived, but in many cases vigorous and active well into their second century.

Paula Garb has an unusual background. She was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1948, and spent most of her childhood in California. Since 1975, she and two sons have lived in Moscow. She has a degree in history from Moscow University with a minor in anthropology, and is currently doing research on foreigners living in the Soviet Union. She has worked as a radio broadcaster, and currently works as a translator with Progress Publishers, which published From Childhood to Centenarian. The book is the result of research for her Master's Degree.

Paula Garb's opportunity to do her research came in 1979 when she joined the Soviet-American study on ageing and longevity, as part of a team which included staff members of the Institute of Ethnography. She does document her statements and conclusions by references to scholarly work, but the charm and the interest in the book lie precisely in her interaction with the people she was interviewing. For instance, she says in her epilogue: "Although it would be impossible and even undesirable to transplant all the outlooks of one society into another set of surroundings, Abkhasian society has inevitably had an important influence in my home and could have in others. I believe the attachment my two sons, ages 11 and 16, have for their grandparents would not be as strong, nor their concern for them so great, if they had not accompanied me on one of my Abkhasian expeditions. Furthermore, I have given this subject much attention in my work and in conversations with friends in my children's presence for the past six years...." Discussion of important matters in the presence of children, she says, is one of the most important child-rearing methods in Abkhasia -- as, indeed, it should be everywhere, but unfortunately is not.

She also has strong thoughts about American attitudes toward the aged, admitting that she did not have "any consistent contact with senior citizens until I became an adult." Everything in her book indicates her appreciation of older people, tempered with precise observation: she knows these people are old, but she searches diligently for the source of their vitality, and finds it in a seeming lack of conflict in their lives. The Soviet psychologist on the expedition reminds her that stress is what the individual makes it. Even joyful events such as marriages, or the birth of a child, can be stressful. One old lady whose life had been far from easy, and who, as a result, apparently had fewer kinfolk on whom to rely, told her that she made an effort not to let things bother her -- spacing out her reactions, in order to make the impact less -- and she counseled her nephews to do the same.

Paula Garb spent some time asking the people she interviewed what they attributed their long life to, but no clear pattern emerged. Diet might be responsible, or environment, or genes, or the fact that sexual relations are maintained well into old age, or even the appreciation of the elderly in the social community, or a combination of all these things. She asked her subjects whether they thought there were more old people in the old days, that is, before the establishment of the Soviet regime. One woman responded that it seemed that way to her, but probably this was because she herself was young and everyone looked old. In any case, everyone she interviewed remembered how things had been before the Revolution, and agreed that the Menshevik interlude in the Caucasus had not been beneficial. On this point, Garb simply notes in a footnote that in 1903 the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party split into two factions, the Bolshevik (majority) and the Menshevik (the minority). Her informants had their own view:

"'I remember the Mensheviks,' Chkua Abukhba told me. 'They behaved exactly like our former landlords and princes -- we had to feed them! If we refused, they forced us. I remember seeing them, and even knew some of the Mensheviks. They took away my older brother, forced him to join their army. But we finally got rid of them.'

"Grigory Akhuba of Chlou summed it up: '"The Mensheviks were worse than the czarist government. They burned down my uncle's home because he didn't go along with them. My uncle then joined the Bolshevik army which was moving in out direction from the north. I got some guns, and with two other friends, fought in a guerilla detachment against the Mensheviks. We peasants didn't like the Mensheviks, particularly because they took our corn and our bread without asking.'" Another person commented: "... I don't remember the common man wanting Menshevik government." Enlightenment about which side to be on was also a personal matter. The much-respected Nestor Lakoba convinced a volunteer soldier that he should leave the Menshevik cause because otherwise he would not be defending the people. (Garb says elsewhere that a common Abkhasian toast is "To the people," reflecting the deep sense of community that Abkhasians have.) The volunteer soldier reported that after this talk: "A new world and new concepts opened up to me. I decided then and there that I would tell the other soldiers we were all wrong." The historical events were much more complex than either Garb or her informants indicate.

The Revolution brought with it land redistribution, diversification of the economy, education for everyone, and greatly lowered infant mortality. Garb's description of the way in which some of her informants live indicates a different standard of living for Abkhasians than for some Russians, at least to judge by the amount of land that each family gets to work for itself. One man with a family of seven has seven cows and 100 chickens, enough so that they never buy milk, eggs, or meat. The man himself has an average monthly wage of 160-170 rubles, with additional bonuses of 3,000 to 4,000 rubles for good work and 1½ to 2½ tons of grapes, which he makes into wine. If he sold the grapes, he would get at least another 2,000 rubles in income. "I calculated that [this] family's cash earnings every year average out to 10,000 rubles. When I interviewed [another family] I learned that their average income is 22,000 a year." The difference in income is accounted for by the fact that the latter family has more people working.

The most interesting parts of the book have to do with child-rearing. Before the Revolution, the custom of fosterage was widespread. A family would pick another family to raise its child, since it was felt that breast milk from another woman made the child much stronger. On another level, this was also a method of forming alliances with powerful families whose patronage would be useful, and it was one of the major bonds in this society, which did not have political institutions of the European type. Sometimes foreigners would also be adopted, and in this case the practice was to approach the intended adoptive mother and kiss her breast three times. This, given the fact that women were not supposed to show themselves to men outside their own families, was a very serious step, and was sometimes used to end a feud.

Parents, and particularly fathers, are not supposed to show affection for the children in public. This is part of a pattern which includes strict avoidance between inlaws, and an elaborate system of etiquette applied where avoidance is impossible. It is a serious breach of good taste, for example, to refer to a man's wife or children when conversing with him, and even for husband and wife to be seen together in public. These rules apply to many of the Caucasian mountain peoples.

Abkhasian boys and girls learn about their roles in life from observing older members of the community. Respect for elders is instilled at a very young age, as is the idea that work should be a pleasure, "good exercise." Garb notes that the Georgians say of someone who is especially well brought up that he was brought up like an Abkhasian, and Soviet educators confirm that Abkhasian children rarely need discipline. Respect for tradition is credited with preserving child rearing practices virtually unchanged. Garb notes that there are still some young adults who break the written and unwritten laws of their communities. If the family has lost control, it will appeal to the kinship group, which holds annual meetings and reports on the behavior of members. If this fails, they then appeal to the Council of Elders, mostly composed of elderly men, but including some women as well. A similar Council of Elders is being formed by youth in the cities, but this is a recent development.

This whole matter of respect for elders is one on which both Soviet scholars and Soviet political leaders are markedly ambivalent. On the one hand, such respect makes social life much smoother and calmer, and is therefore highly desirable, but on the other, the elders were brought up under a vastly different social and political system and often (particularly in the Caucasus and in Central Asia) display ideas and behavior which are "backward" from the modern and official Soviet point of view.

As might be expected, there is some discussion among educated people about which customs should be preserved and which should be done away with. Garb says that in all her years of study, she met only two women who were dissatisfied with the position of women in the present Soviet society, and they were mostly chafing at the customs which dictated that a woman should not nurse her child in the same room as the inlaws, and show affection to either the child or husband in the presence of the inlaws. Even very old women admitted that Abkhasian men were always kind to their women, unlike what is said to be the case among Russian peasants.

The efforts of the Soviet regime to give status to the Abkhasian language and literature are also interesting, since the information parallels some of the efforts discussed in Issue No. 3 of The Station Relay for the Peoples of the North. Garb notes that Abkhasia University in Sukhumi is the youngest university in the country, and that there are 67 other universities. It is also the only university, Garb says, where one can study in three languages, Russian, Abkhasian, and Georgian. Local television carries programming in the Abkhasian language and, since broadcasting was to expand in 1985, much effort was being put into training personnel for the new facilities. Students were being sent to Moscow, Leningrad, and to Tbilisi, but the journalists would come from the language department of Abkhasia University.

Though Chapter Four ("Abkhasian Bolsheviks") seems rather inadequate, we can heartily recommend this book to our readers. As our friend William Mandel notes, the interview technique sometimes beats straight history.

For further information on Caucasian customs and social structure, our readers can consult the following translated articles:

B. Kh. BGAZHNOKOV, "On the Significance of the Scholar's Ethical Position in

Ethnographic Research," Soviet Anthropology and Archeology 1979, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, pp. 73-85.

Ia. S. SMIRNOVA and A.I. PERSHITS, "Avoidance, Socioeconomic Evaluation or "Ethical Neutrality"?," Soviet Anthropology and Archeology, 1979, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, pp. 32-50.

Ia. S. SMIRNOVA, "Avoidance Customs Among the Adygei and Their Disappearance During the Soviet Era," Soviet Anthropology and Archeology, 1962, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 31-40.

Ia. S. SMIRNOVA, "Some Religious Survivals Among the Black Sea Adygei," Soviet Anthropology and Archeology, 1964, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 3-9.

Ia. S. SMIRNOVA, "Some Quantitative Indices of Abandonment of Avoidance Customs Among the Kabardins and Balkarians," Soviet Sociology, 1979, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, pp. 32-44.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SPORTS

According to the latest figures at our disposal, in 1983 there were 31 million members of the Physical Education system known by its initials GTO [in Russian, this stands for Prepared for Work and Defense of the USSR], enrolled in 255,000 physical education organizations. In 1983 there were 3,622 sports stadiums with room for more than 1,500 people. The Soviet concept of stadium is much broader than in the United States, since one may engage in any number of sports activities at the stadium, under the supervision of paid personnel.

One of the larger of these organizations is "Dinamo" in Kiev, which fields the soccer team of the same name. A recent article in Izvestiia says that their stadium is small (for only 18,000 spectators), but they have very comfortable facilities, among which are swimming pools for children from 2-6 years of age with or without their parents. More than 7,000 children were enrolled last year. The number of 3-ruble tickets sold has risen from 16,859 in 1980 to 54,800 in 1985. All of the more than 60 instructors have higher education and the majority are sports masters, including world class and honored sportsmen. Being a good sportsman does not always mean that one can teach the sport in question, and therefore the people at "Dinamo" decided to peg the wages of the instructor to the number of people in his or her group, because earlier the system was pay by the hour, and there was little incentive. The system of paying according to the number of people in the group has been in effect for about six years, but has not been extended to other sports organizations, and does not have the force of law. There are also some problems: if there are 80 persons in a group, the coach gets 115 rubles; if there are less, he should get less, just as if the number rises to 90 or 100, he should get more. In fact, no matter what happens, he gets 115 rubles. Everyone concerned with the administration of "Dinamo" thinks it's time that the wages for coaches be fixed by law, but the Kiev City Soviet, which apparently would be responsible for seeing that this was done, have not yet addressed the problem.

N. BAKLANOV, "V tsentre vnimaniia -- tsentr zdorov'ia," ["A Health Center at the Center of Attention"], Izvestiia, 6/V/86: 6.

Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1983 g. [The Economy of the USSR in 1983], Moscow, 1984, pp. 452-453.

THE PROBLEM OF ALCOHOLISM

There is a well known historical anecdote to the effect that when, in the 10th century, Prince Vladimir of Kiev was looking for a suitable religion for his people, who until then had been pagan, he sent out emissaries to the centers of the major world religions -- Christianity (in its Eastern Orthodox form), Judaism, and Islam. When the emissary who had visited the Muslim holy places returned, he reported that Muslim worship was lofty and dignified and seemed suitable in all respects save one: the rules of the faith prohibited the drinking of liquor. On hearing this, the Prince said in effect: "Well, a religion like that, whatever its other merits might be, would never do for my people. Next report!" No one contends that this is a true story, but it does illustrate the historical depth of the problem of alcoholism in Russia, and also something about the way the Russians see themselves. The state has had for many centuries a monopoly on the sale and production of liquor -- either an absolute monopoly, as is the case now, or at least the power of licensing. This means that it has always derived considerable material benefit from the drinking habits of its people, and that any effort to control these habits starts out with at least one strike against it.

The Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party has adopted a resolution "On Measures to Overcome Drunkenness and Alcoholism," published in Pravda May 17, 1985. These measures are apparently having some effect. In an article in the main Soviet sociological journal, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Internal Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (the regular, uniformed police), G. G. Zaigraev, writes: "Analysis of the state of affairs in Moscow, Kuibyshev, Karaganda, and in a number of other cities shows that in the two months of work which has taken place on the implementation of the Resolution which has been adopted, the sale of alcoholic beverages had been reduced 20-30% by comparison with the corresponding period of the previous year, the amount of absenteeism and other violations of labor discipline on the basis of drunkenness is significantly reduced and crime is somewhat reduced. . . .

"However, there are no grounds yet for asserting that drunkenness is in retreat. The use of such prophylactic factors as a sharp reduction in the accessibility of alcoholic drinks and the strengthening of social control over behavior of persons who abuse alcohol and a change in the social atmosphere are quite capable of leading to noticeable positive results but are not able to produce a basic change in the situation."

Zaigraev isn't necessarily in favor of prohibition; not even the most severe prohibitive legislation, he says, can remove the causes of alcohol abuse, and furthermore, reduction of the availability of alcohol has to be accompanied by an increase in other consumer goods and services. This argument, echoed by N. I. Pauzin, Chairman of the Exective Committee of the Kirov Oblast Soviet in an interview with a reporter from Sel'skaia zhizn' (13/III/86: 4) assumes that if people have a lot of consumer goods available for purchase, they won't buy liquor, but sociological studies indicate, although the results are ambiguous, that heavy drinking is not always the result of material hardship. At the same time, heavy drinking does correlate -- just as one would expect, and just as it does in the U.S. and in other countries -- with frequent conflicts in the family, divorce, and other negative social phenomena. However, it is not clear from the Soviet data whether these phenomena are the cause of heavy drinking or result from it. In any case, in Kirov Oblast the number of stores selling liquor will be reduced from about 2,000 to only 300, and many Executive Committees have forbidden the sale of liquor entirely on their territories during the summer and fall agricultural work. Furthermore, stores have received lists of names of people to whom they should not sell liquor; if someone else (whose name is not on the list) purchases liquor and gives it to someone who isn't supposed to have it, the former is also deprived of the right to purchase it. In addition, Article 16 of the Civil Code of the RSFSR allows for the withholding of wages in cases of abuse of alcohol, though nothing is said about how widely the Article has been implemented.

In the course of his interview, Pauzin stated that in his opinion people would drink less if they had other ways of spending leisure time, and he noted that nearly 20 sports and cultural complexes had been built. In the near future, they expect to have a real stadium in every raion center, and a sports hall in every place of work. In addition the old local handicrafts and national games are being reintroduced.

The study of alcoholism in Kirov reported on by Zaigraev was quite elaborate. It included three mass questionnaire surveys in 1972, 1979, and 1984, both of the population as a whole, and of the people directly involved in the anti-alcoholism campaign. Kirov was apparently chosen because statistics showed that the alcohol problem was worse there than in most other Russian cities of similar size. This contrasts with what was the practice some years ago, when the sites for studies of serious social problems were often chosen so as to minimize the severity of these problems. Four groups were studied: 30,000 who were brought to medically-equipped sobering-up stations, 7500 persons registered as addicted to alcohol, about 2300 who abused alcohol, and an unspecified number of people in a control group who were thought to lead a healthy life.

"Views, customs, and traditions which dictate a stereotype of alcohol behavior in particular situations play a special role in the degree of dissemination of alcohol consumption. The surveys show that in the everyday consciousness of various groups in the population over the past few years, the conviction that it is necessary to mark any important date in personal and social life by drinking liquor has become firmly established. Drinking has become almost the rule on receiving one's pay, buying expensive items, being promoted, and the like. 76% of our expert panel listed drinking on receipt of wages as among the most widespread drinking customs: this is in addition to drinking on holidays and when guests are received. Drinking parties are very often held in connection with receipt of bonuses or supplementary or incidental pay, in gratitude for help provided, and in honor of holidays. Such a transformation of drinking customs had an extremely negative influence on the alcohol situation as a whole. Thus, according to the survey data, only one inhabitant in every 11 ranked himself or herself among those who consumed alcoholic drinks extremely rarely or not at all, and one in four ranked himself or herself among those who drank rarely and only in very small amounts. On the other hand, 11% of the adult population (among males, 20.6%) consume alcohol several times a week and 19% (among males, 31%) not less than once a week."

Statistical data on people picked up for public drunkenness and brought to the sobering up point, and also on those registered as addicted, indicate that the bulk of the heavy drinking in Kirov is done by workers directly involved in the production of tangible goods (as opposed to the service sphere, trade, and other fields) -- 77% of those picked up for public drunkenness and 79% of those registered as addicted. People of other categories and orientations, such as engineering-and-technical personnel, white-collar workers, pensioners, and disabled people and students were much less frequent among those picked up or among registered addicts. No information on the occupational makeup of the population as a whole is given. Other cities, such as Novgorod, Riazan and Dzerzhinsk, show approximately the same results. Surveys of adolescents and young people performed by Zaigraev at 15 year intervals show that there is an increase in the proportion of those people who consume liquor at least from time to time. In 1965, 50% of girls and 70% of boys were in this category, and in the early 80s, it was 70% of girls and 95% of boys. Only a little more than a half (54%) of the respondents in the city itself considered it impermissible to appear drunk in a public place, and one man out of every five thought that this behavior was quite permissible as long as it didn't lead to violation of order, conflict, or scandal.

Another public opinion poll was conducted in eleven regions of the Soviet Union ranging from the Estonian SRR, which has the highest consumption of absolute alcohol in the Soviet Union, to the Tadzhik SSR, which has a non-alcoholic tradition. The sample included 2,444 persons aged 18 to 60. Most of the respondents felt that eight categories of acts should be punished, and that punishment would be effective: appearing drunk in public places, drinking on the streets and in parks and in stadiums, drinking on the job, making homebrew and keeping it in large quantities, buying homebrew, giving liquor to minors, speculating in liquor, and violation of the trade rules for liquor trade workers. A large majority, between 80 and 85% of the sample, condemned public drinking and violation of the rules of the liquor trade; 71.3% thought that public drunkenness should be punishable; the percentage that thought that making homebrew without intending to sell it was somewhat lower; 74.5% would punish the purchase of homebrewed liquor, but in Georgia and Moldavia, these figures were much lower, 45.3% and 41.3%. More than half of the respondents thought that the present punishments for alcohol abuse were not strict enough, and only a small minority thought that they were too strict. A large majority felt that administrative penalties such as the confiscation of bonuses and the withholding of authorization to houses for vacation rest should be more widely used, and a majority, although a smaller one, also felt that the removal of people from waiting lists for apartments was an appropriate method of punishment.

[It is surprising to find Zaigraev saying that the custom of drinking in order to mark important events is something new, or is a "transformation" of previous behavior among urban Russians. The ethnographic literature on Russian peasants shows that liquor has for centuries been an important component of their non-religious ritual life.

[The sample used by Gorshkov and Sheregi for their public opinion poll is extremely small relative to the population that it is supposed to represent. Since the authors give no information on their statistical methodology we have no way of knowing what the poll's margin of error is, or how accurate the results may be in other respects. This point is important, because the authors seem to be saying that a majority of the population, at least in certain areas, is opposed to some provisions of Soviet law, which presently prohibits the making of homebrew (including wine), even for personal use. The reporting of such data is highly unusual in official Soviet publications.

[There are no grounds for assuming that the alcohol problem in the Soviet Union is more severe than in this country or elsewhere. On the other hand, its character does seem to be somewhat different. The data suggest that what we see in the Soviet Union is social drinking which frequently gets out of hand, while in this country, the typical clinical alcoholic drinks alone and often in secret -- or at least that is the stereotype. The remedies for the alcohol problem suggested by

Soviet political officials and writers in specialized journals do not indicate that they view alcoholism primarily as a disease or a public health problem to which medical models are applicable (except in the case of alcohol addiction as such), as the standard liberal opinion in this country would have it. Readers will recall that in "The Village of Rechnoe," the fisherman Valentin drank because he had nothing else on which to spend the proceeds of his stolen fish. The idea of substituting washing machines and other consumer goods for liquor may strike American readers as bizarre, but it may also be quite valid in the Soviet context, and if it is, this would tend to show that Soviet (or Russian) drunkenness is a rather different phenomenon from what we see in the United States.]

G.G. Zaigraev, "Alkogol'naia situatsiia -- ob"ekt profilakticheskogo vozdeistviia," ["The alcohol situation as an object of prophylactic action"], Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 1985, No. 4, pp. 47-55.

M.K. Gorshkov and F.E. Sheregi, "Obshchestvennoe mnenie o bor'be s p'ianstvom i alkogolizmom," ["Public opinion on the struggle with drunkenness and alcoholism"], Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 1986, No. 1, pp. 42-50.

PENSIONS

More than two million people yearly in the RSFSR apply for pensions, and legislation recognizes more than 50 kinds. Not surprisingly, many people write to Izvestiia to ask what their rights are in this matter. A number of questions are posed, and the answers given. The commentator begins by saying that a person may apply at any time, but if they have not worked full-time, workers and white-collar personnel should apply during the time that they are working or not later than one month after the time that they stop. This does not apply to women who have borne or adopted five or more children and raised them to the age of eight, or to mothers with children disabled from birth. The necessary documentation for pensions should be gotten from the organization where the person worked, and if it is no longer in operation, then from its legal successor. The local Departments of Social Security are obliged to help people who want pensions to gather the necessary documentation, and they can also independently demand documents from enterprises and organizations and investigate the legality of their transmittal.

A woman asks whether it is true that her son, a student in the sixth grade, is entitled to receive pension payments for the loss of a breadwinner (his father), even though the father had little to do with raising the son. The woman was divorced seven years ago, and although her former husband paid alimony voluntarily when he was working at a factory, in the last years of his life he was ill a lot and didn't work, and died not long ago. The response is that until the son reaches the age of 16, or 18 if he remains in school, he does have a right to pension payments, and the amount will be based on the last twelve months that the deceased worked, or for any five years out of the last ten before the application for a pension, whichever is higher.

A person who cannot document the entire length of time he or she has worked must document at least half. The Commission for Awarding Pensions does so in this case on the testimony of two or more witnesses, one of whom has to have been a co-worker. An exception would apply if the person had lost his or her documents during the Second World War, or during the evacuation of people to safer areas, or as the result of some other catastrophe. Petitions for increased pensions may not be supported by witnesses.

Retirement age for men is 60, and for women 55, except in these cases: retirement age is lowered by ten, and length of working career is lowered by five years for those who have spent not less than half of the time in subterranean work, hot shops [in steel mills], or other dangerous conditions. Pension age for those who have had uninterrupted working careers is lowered by five years. In addition, persons in the following categories may retire five years early with varying lengths of working career: those who have spent not less than half of their time in heavy industry, or who have worked in the textile industry not less than 20 years at certain jobs in certain enterprises; also, women who have spent not less than fifteen years as tractor-drivers or equipment-operators in agriculture and other branches of the economy, or who have worked as equipment-operators in construction, railroads, or with loading and unloading machines, according to a special list; or blue-collar and white-collar workers who have worked not less than 15 calendar years in regions of the Far North, or not less than 20 in places which are equated to it. [This last provision takes the severe Siberian climate into account.] Veterans of the Second World War (or people equated with them) have the right to retire five years early, as do mothers who have raised five or more children to the age of eight. Early retirement is given to blind workers: women can retire fifteen years earlier, with ten years less service; men receive a pension ten years earlier with ten years less service.

Another letter in this series is from a man who says that in a month he will be 50, and he thinks that he has the right to a pension, since after the Army, he worked in the North for six years, but when he asked his personnel office about this, they said it was too soon and when he asked the local Social Security Office, they sent him back to the administration at his place of work. The man asks, should I wait to be dismissed from my job and then think about a pension. The answer is that he should not be dismissed, but simply submit an official declaration of intent to apply for a pension to the administration. At that point his trade union committee and the administration will look into the matter and perhaps ask for documents; then after ten days, the matter will be sent to the local Social Security Office. If the plant administration and trade union decide that he doesn't qualify, they have to let him know why in writing, and if he is dissatisfied with their ruling, he can himself apply to the local Social Security Office.

The situation for a person who has not worked for some time is more complicated, and the rules for determining when a working career has or has not been interrupted is extremely complex. A woman writes that she left work three years ago for family reasons, and will soon be 55. She wants to know if she has the right to a full pension if the total time she worked was 22 years, 16 of them uninterrupted. The answer is that she gets a 10% increase to the amount of her pension for the uninterrupted service, if that can be documented. However, if she had not worked full time, she would have to work not less than three years before applying for a pension.

A person who qualifies for a pension can have the pension set at the rate measured by the average wages in any five-year period out of the last ten before applying for a pension. The person applying can exclude from account months in which he or she actually did not work or did not work all the time, because of illness, vacation or some other legitimate reason, but only months which immediately precede the last twelve month period or the last five year period. Pensions for kolkhozniks are calculated on the basis of the average monthly wage for any consecutive five year period out of the last ten before applying.

The last letter inquires to whom the 20% increase to pensions (in effect since 1983) applies. The answer is that three conditions have to be met: uninterrupted service for not less than 25 years, and for women with one or more children, not less than 20 years; a length of working career not less than ten years on top of the number required for award of pension; full time work as a blue- or white-collar worker as of January 1st, 1983 and later. These requirements do not extend to veterans of World War II.

[A couple of points not mentioned by the legal commentator should be mentioned. People who wish to continue working after retirement age may do so and continue to receive their pensions, and many in fact do. Also, schooling does not, generally speaking, constitute an interruption of the working career, nor does maternity leave or illness with temporary disability. In certain jobs, particularly in agriculture, the kolkhoz chairman or the immediate supervisor has a good deal of control over working conditions, and especially over what is or is not considered an interruption of the working career. Good workers get breaks. Uncooperative ones who refuse assignments usually do not. This may strike us as a source of potential injustice, but we should remember that the chairman is personally responsible for the running of the farm, and, arguably, should have the corresponding control over it.

"Obrashchenie za pensiei," ["Applying for Pensions"], Izvestiia 19/III/86: 3.

V.D. SHAPIRO, Life After Retirement: Social Problems and Life Styles, a book translated in full in Soviet Sociology, 1983, Vol. 22, No. 1-2.

SPINAL CORD DISABLED

Information on how the disabled live in the Soviet Union and what the attitudes of the public are toward them is relatively hard to come by. As we indicated in No. 4 of The Station Relay, the existence of a disabled rights movement in the Soviet Union has been documented, although the documentation has said little about numbers. It is possible that the disabled rights movement in the USSR was largely the result of the efforts of four people (who might, in spite of their numbers, still voice the concerns of thousands).

What life might be like for those thousands can sometimes be found in unlikely places, such as Nauka i religiia [Science and Religion] which published three sketches about spinal cord disabled. The center of all of them is Leonid Krasov, a 34-year-old neurosurgeon and sports enthusiast, who on March 4, 1963 fell off a trampoline and suffered a fracture and dislocation of the first lumbar vertebra and compound fractures of the second and third. At that time, the conventional wisdom was that a patient with such an injury would never walk again. Immediately on being brought to the hospital, Krasov sent for a notebook and began writing down his impressions. Although in constant pain, he refused the morphine that was offered him, saying, "All I have is my hands and my head, and you want to turn off my head."

At the Institute, he met one of the leading coaches in medical gymnastics for children who had had polio; she was there as a patient. She pointed out to Krasov that some of his symptoms resembled those of polio, and suggested that he use some of the same exercises. In particular, she advised him to walk with loosely laced splints, so that his knee joints would gradually become accustomed to being controlled by his own muscles.

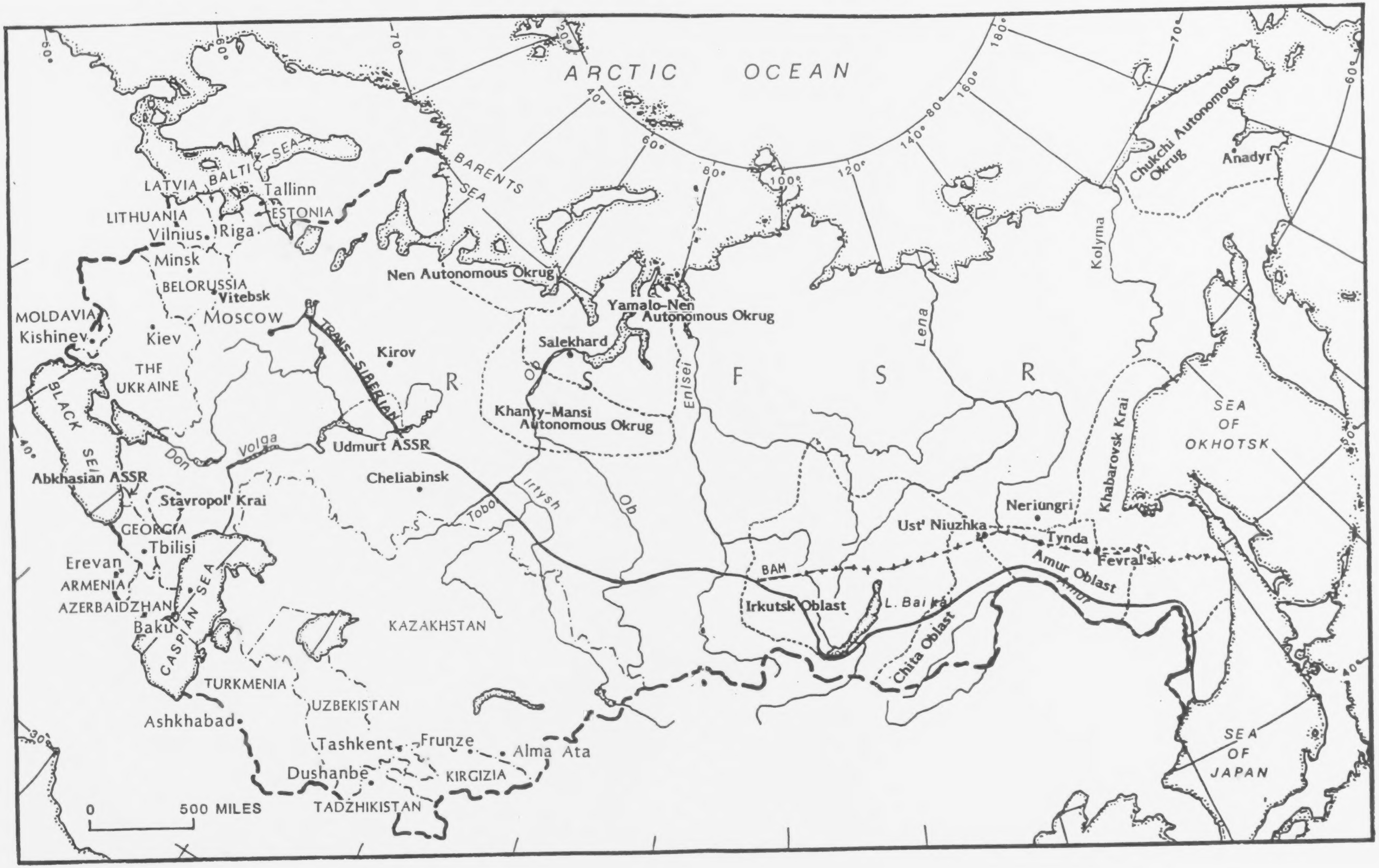
Contrary to the usual behavior of spinal patients, Krasov took charge of his own case, arguing with the doctors who advised postponing physical therapy and (according to the standard practice of the time) applying elaborate braces which were to run from the waist down to the heels. Krasov taught the nurses and his friends massage methods, and, with their help, improvised the needed equipment for exercise and training, which was lacking at the Institute. After he left the Institute, a bedroom in his apartment in Moscow was fitted out as a small gymnasium, and he exercised at all hours of the day and night. Someone lived permanently in the apartment with him, helping him keep house, maintain the equipment, and live through the inevitable depressions and illnesses.

He had been able, relatively soon after the accident, to achieve some movement of his legs, which indicated that part of the spinal cord was intact. His recovery was eventually virtually complete: an illustration to the article shows him paddling a raft-like vessel in the water.

This account is in many ways a typical "inspirational piece," such as one might find in many American mass magazines or on prime-time TV. In fact, the editors of Nauka i religiia received many letters asking whether Krasov were not an isolated case, and whether it was really a good idea to publicize his methods and experiences. Krasov himself admitted that few could do what he had, that in many cases, as soon as he went away, the patient had a relapse. To do what Krasov did and be what he has become takes a certain tough attitude, a certain love of life and awareness of where one fits in, and an ability to rise above pain by becoming absorbed in intellectual pursuits. Krasov spent some part of his childhood in an orphanage, and he says he learned early that he was not the navel of the universe.

Using the example of Sasha Chizhkov, Nauka i religiia's correspondent Inga Ballod delves into what this means. Sasha was 20 (and had already served as a parachutist in the Army) when he dove into a river and broke his neck. People are kind to him, but his reaction is to "drop out of life." Unlike Krasov, he has no goals, and much less education. In the beginning, he had indicated that he wanted to complete the ninth grade by correspondence, but the inspector in the local Department of Education, who had promised to help with textbooks, failed to follow through, and though Sasha would have liked to visit the village library, he does not want to go through the village in a wheelchair [perhaps there are no paved roads or sidewalks; perhaps he is simply ashamed]. Sasha is cared for by his mother, and he is lonely. In his village of 50 households, he waits until someone brings him a small appliance to repair, and takes pictures of the people around him. Correspondence with Ballod, lasting a year, is his way out of loneliness. In the beginning, he confesses that he cannot call himself a believer, but, faced with death, he has started to think and to question. Later he tells Ballod: "Precisely because there is death, I would like to live. If we were immortal, we would not want to act. Life and death do not contradict but rather complement each other."

Ballod asserts that Sasha can find friends and satisfaction from life if he makes the first move. She cites a man who was a specialist in the food industry and had gone with the Soviet Embassy to Mongolia. He became disabled at 37,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Vitebsk
MOLDAVIA
Kishinev
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MOSCOW
THE UKRAINE
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Kirov
Udmurt ASSR
Cheliabinsk
Abkhasian ASSR
Stavropol' Krai
GEORGIA
Tbilisi
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TURKMENIA
Ashkhabad
UZBEKISTAN
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Frunze
Alma Ata
Dushanbe
KIRGIZIA
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and after a year, the doctor told him nothing more could be done. He thinks that Krasov's case only adds stress to an already stressful situation, and the spinal disabled should as soon as possible adapt. It took him a year and a half; it takes others longer. Essentially, he rethought his life and prepared his family for a lower standard of living, and for the difficulties connected with his immobility. For five years he worked with students at the Food Institute, but then he quit, and through the Department for Job Placement of the Disabled, he found employment as a homebound worker for one of the factories, and for 20 years has been making lamp sockets. It is a six-hour work day, with days off and vacations. For him the main thing is that he has, for the last 25 years, continued to work. Ballod contrasts this with a young man in a wheelchair, who, though disabled from birth, takes part in the social and intellectual life of his village. Sasha must do likewise.

After some correspondence about finding and using one's inner resources, Sasha gets a major material resource, a Zaporozhets [a small car on indefinite loan from the Social Security Office], and his world changes: he needs assistants, spare parts, and a garage. There are plans to make him an assistant through correspondence at a Moscow therapeutic center, so that he can counsel others in his situation.

The emphasis on linking people together is developed even more strongly in a sketch about Natasha Smeikal, a student in the 10th grade in Cheliabinsk who fell four storeys and broke her neck. Operations did not help, but her devoted parents heard about Leonid Krasov, and Natasha began to follow his instructions. While still on crutches, she entered a school for paramedics and graduated as a teacher of massage, and then began to work in the medical facilities of the Cheliabinsk Tractor Factory. Since she liked to help people, she began to travel around, visiting spinal disabled, bringing small presents, hope, and a fresh look at life. She is asked how she bears pain, and she answers that at first she was sorry for her parents, and then she gained a sense of her connectedness with life that never left her. She goes to visit a man who was disabled during a partisan action in his village during World War II (he was a very young civilian), and the next day goes to the village Soviet to chew out the Komsomols for forgetting him. She says that the attitude toward the sick, the disabled and the elderly is a measure of public morality and an index of social health. She quotes Saint Exupery to the effect that the spiritual life of a city can be judged by the richness of a disabled person's inner life. Natasha Smeikal is not really a mystic, she just has a fierce faith in the power of personal friendships. She travels around the Soviet Union, supporting herself as a tour guide. In Dushanbe, believers are so taken with her that they want her to join their congregation, but she says that kindness and empathy should not be treated like a commodity, because then they have no advantage over indifference. Her idea of friendship is very exacting: "If I find that a person is not what I thought, I break off relations with him without resentment. I need trustworthiness as I need food." Apparently she found that in her relations with the elderly and disabled she met on her travels. In September, 1984, having rejected the profession of patient, Natasha Smeikal died.

INGA BALLOD, "Shag cherez katastrofu," ["A Step Across Catastrophe"], Nauka i religiia, 1979, No. 10, pp. 8-11.

L. KRASOV, "Znanie, volia, vera," ["Knowledge, Will, Faith"], Nauka i religiia, 1984, No. 12, pp. 13-17.

N. UVAROVA, "Neudachi menia ne ostanavlivali," ["Misfortune didn't stop me"], Nauka i religiia, 1985, No. 12, pp. 8-11.

MORE ON THE MARRIAGE MARKET

In the last issue of The Station Relay, we told you about a study by three Lithuanian sociologists of marital advertisements appearing in the Lithuanian magazine Sheima. The same sociologists have now published another article on the same topic, in which they flesh out their conclusions and give a rather complex linguistic and sociological analysis of the actual texts of letters sent in to the magazine; they call this analysis an "experiment." The linguistic analysis seems to use concepts and techniques taken from the work of the late French linguist and literary critic Roland Barthes -- although he is not mentioned by name.

"What are the major goals of our analysis? First of all, we intended to find in the metalanguage at least some of the components of the semantics of the letters (primarily the socially typical and individual ones) and to reveal, on the phenomenological level, the units of the text (key themes and motifs), which correspond to the perceived meanings. [In Barthes' terminology, "metalanguage" is "what is not on the paper" -- that is, what was in the writer's mind when he or she wrote, and what is in the reader's mind after reading the text. The underlined statements in the quotation below represent the metalanguage of the letter writers as the sociologists understand it -- that is, the unspoken assumptions on which the letters were based.] Our task includes in addition the reconstruction of the implicit premises ... of what is said and the restoration on this basis of the system of views and value concepts of those who participate in the experiment, relative to the family and marital sphere of life."

The authors of letters to Sheima (78.7% of whom are women, most of them well educated) feel shame and embarrassment in writing and feel exposed specifically because of their unmarried state. They are addressing the editors specifically as strangers, to whom they can say things which they couldn't say to members of their families or to casual acquaintances -- just as a Western person might address a psychiatrist or a counselor of some other kind.

"The letters reveal to us a picture of a divided life. On the outside, everything usually looks all right ('to the people around me at work, and to my neighbors, I live well;' and there follows a list: good job, salary, apartment, prospects on the job or in studies). As for the hidden aspect, here we can isolate a number of fields whose 'secret' is guarded by socio-psychological regulators.

"It's hard to admit that you need another person. The spontaneous norm which prescribes the autonomy and independence of the adult person prompts people to resort to complex forms of etiquette which demonstrate that the author and the addressee 'need each other.' [Note that the real addressee here is not the editors of Sheima but the ultimate reader of the advertisement.] At the same time, a normative 'permission' to express the fact that one needs someone else ('I want to be needed by someone') is widely used, and this includes, in a transformed way, the need for a marital partner ('the one who unselfishly needs you, just as you need him').

"It's hard (particularly for a woman) to admit that you're looking specifically for a marital partner -- that is, a person of the opposite sex -- since the spontaneous norm forbids open, conscious interference in intimate relations, and prescribes that the man should be the active party in observing definite rules of courtship....

"It's hard to admit that one's personal life has not been successful, since the spontaneous socio-psychological regulators evaluate a person's entry into the 'second circle of life' ... as a defeat, a failure in life. The label of failure may become attached to a person who is still young, who has everything ahead of her but nevertheless considers herself 'finished' ('Many years of the pain of loneliness pursue me -- will this always be so?!' 'This existence is miserable, without a future')....

"It is humiliating, when one is no longer young, to be concerned about the ordering of one's personal life ('when you've reached a certain age, personal life is considered something reprehensible,' 'I have secretly dreamed of having a family, or at least three children'). For some participants in the experiment, entry into the 'second circle' is in itself a sign of failure (the ages of the letter writers who share this view vary upwards from 30)."

[The Lithuanian sociologists define the 'second circle of life' as including those people who are beyond the age -- roughly 20-35 -- at which a first marriage and the establishment of a family are socially expected to take place. If these things happen after that age, they produce a certain social tension and feeling of inappropriateness. However, given the fact that the divorce rate and the number of single mothers are rising sharply, particularly in the more urbanized parts of the country and in the Soviet equivalent of the middle class, from which most of Sheima's subscribers apparently come, it is clear that social expectations are somewhat out of sync with sociological and demographic reality.]

"The decision of the participants in the experiment to include themselves in the marriage market means that they have consciously agreed to resort to an unusual way of introducing themselves. This in turn presupposes that the people we are studying are informed about the usual ways of introducing oneself. Let us compare the latter with the situation in which the people who were compelled to have recourse to the magazine's services found themselves, and with the new norms which arose in the course of the experiment.

"The principle of egalitarianism (or, in other words, emancipation) and equality of the sexes, which is proclaimed in all areas of social life, and which extends formally to marital relationships, can serve as a provisional point of departure. In schematic form, the postulates of this principle can be presented as a series of abstract propositions.

"Each person may turn to any citizen whom he/she does not know and become acquainted with him/her. The word 'any' in this context signifies an absence of hierarchy, and the accessibility of each one -- in both the biological and the social sense. This is what we call the ideal. In reality, on the other hand, there are a multitude of barriers and limitations (real or imagined). These include defects in external appearance (for example, excessive height or shortness, plumpness, thinness, visible mutilation), poor health, and differences in social and material position. Finally, the active role in the rules of courtship is, as previously, given to men.

"All men and women -- regardless of differences in age -- may marry. In fact, as we all know, young women enjoy a real advantage.... One of [the letter writers], for example, writes, 'Even retired men -- as ridiculous as this may seem --want women of 30 or 40, and pretty ones, at that! This is as if women of 30 or 40 were to demand 18-year-old men.'

"All social situations are equally open as far as the origin of of marital relations is concerned. In reality, the erotic atmosphere is 'limited' (by spontaneous regulation, of course) to a particular radius -- a dance, an evening party, a restaurant, a tourist excursion, or the like. For the participants in the experiment, many of these places are already psychologically inaccessible (a typical complaint is that 'there isn't anyplace to get acquainted'). A huge range of sociocultural roles is in principle non-erotic.

"Differences in social experience, and the particulars of a person's past biography should not be a hindrance to marital relations based on equality. But this is also not the case: the self-perception of the writers of letters and advertisements shows that the psychological traumas of the period of early socialization (childhood and early youth), which the writers call shyness, bashfulness, timidity, excessive modesty, and the evaluation of the past life as a failure or defective is a serious barrier to the establishment of contacts with persons of the opposite sex...."

The Sheima experiment, the authors conclude, substituted a conscious, analytical procedure for the usual spontaneous and non-analytical process of mate selection. "It turned out that many material, biosocial, and personal features of the life which had developed (or, more often, not developed) have their 'price' in the struggle to attract the attention of a potential partner. For example, a child --the object of maternal joy -- turns out to be a negative factor which hinders a new marriage. For people in the 'second circle' this 'discovery,' together with the disorganization of daily life, the drunkenness of husbands, the approach of old age, and so forth, made up part of their considerable social experience."

It is curious, the Lithuanian sociologists remark, that while the women who participated in the experiment took the active role in mate selection (at least potentially), the few men who wrote letters and advertisements,as their texts show, took the traditional feminine role and waited passively to be chosen.

The remarkable aspect of this experiment, we think, is how close the pattern of behavior which it reveals comes to that of upper-middle-class Americans. The authors note specifically that mate selection and the complex of behavior surrounding it is one of the few spheres of life which the state makes no consistent effort to direct and regulate; hence their repeated mention of "spontaneous regulators" and "spontaneous norms," which may strike our readeers as rather odd turns of phrase. It is probably no accident that we find such a striking parallel between Soviet and Western behavior in a field where planning and regulation have so far failed (whether for good or ill) to take hold.

Finally, there is one striking difference between the American and Soviet situations: a quite well-defined contingent of the participants in the Sheima experiment consists of women who have post-secondary education in the humanistic fields, and consequently an educational advantage over most of the available men. Other Soviet studies of marriage patterns in rural areas show that many women marry men with less education than they have. On the other hand, the Lithuanian sociologists point out that the women participating in the Sheima experiment tend to have rather unrealistic expectations as far as marital opportunities are concerned, and either remain unmarried or at least have to resort to unconventional methods of mate selection.

The authors conclude: "The revolution which we call freedom of marital choice has become a general democratic achievement and has become part of the high-prestige norms. However, a significant part of the population — primarily women of a certain age and personal fate -- has remained 'unclaimed,' and under the present socio-psychological form of regulation, it is impossible either to compensate or to direct this free, spontaneous process by any sociocultural measures whatever. In other words, the principle of freedom of choice, in this case, contradicts the principle of egalitarianism."

V. A. GAIDIS, S. S. RAPORT, D. P. TUREIKITE, "Ob"ekt analyza -- pis'ma uchastnikov eksperimenta v redaktsiiu zhurnal 'Sheima,'" ["An Analysis of Letters to the Editor of the magazine Sheima by Participants in an Experiment"], Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 1986, No. 1, pp. 82-92.

STILL MORE ON THE SOVIET NORTH

Last month Izvestiia published a report of the meetings of the Permanent Commissions on Housing and on Communal and Urban Facilities under the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which, in a joint session, were discussing the conditions of life in the region of the Baikail-Amur Railroad (BAM).

It has been a year and a half since, at the Balbukhta siding, BAM was declared completed, and trains are in operation after ten years of construction, but the process cannot be considered over because still more work needs to be done and the necessary conditions for normal life and work over the enormous territory of BAM have not been created. This is the fault of the Ministry of mmunication, the Ministry for Trans- t Construction, the State Planning ganization of the USSR, and a number other agencies, who allowed a certain proportion in planning even at the roject stage. Considerable sums set aside for capital construction were never used at all (only 30% in new territory, for example). In fact, these funds were cut still further, and as a result, the entire territory needs every kind of facility.

Especially serious miscalculations were made at Tynda, the largest junction for BAM. An ordinary station with a population of 19,000 people was planned and at the present there are about 60,000! The result is that more than half of the population is living in temporary housing, most of which is in poor condition, and the communal facilities of the city [water supply, electricity, gas, etc.] are still rudimentary. In the settlement of Fevral'sk with a population of almost 10,000, there is no large kindergarten, nursery, hospital, polyclinic, or store. It is probably an indication of the ageing of the rest of the country that the birthrate along BAM is among the highest.

Residential housing in particular came in for much criticism, especially a type of housing called Series 122. The First Deputy Minister of Communications, A. Bevzenko, admitted that the houses were a mistake, and 12 years of construction would have to be corrected. Where were you these 12 years, asked Deputy Novolodskii, himself a construction foreman, who in his commentary had called construction of these houses "a real crime." Part of the blame is laid on the mentality that considered the construction of BAM a temporary phenomenon (it took 10 years to complete and is still not fully operational). In the Larba-Ust'-Niukzha sector, dwellings, schools, kindergartens and trade- and-consumer-service centers have not been built, and in Neriungri, in the Yakut ASSR, the Ministry of Energy has year after year cut back on funds for this type of construction. As the deputies note, it is not the local Soviets that are at fault, it is the Ministries that don't listen. In the Buryat and Yakut ASSSRs, in Khabarovsk Krai and Chita and Irkutsk Oblasts, little is being done to develop an agricultural base to feed the population. To supply Tynda alone with milk would require 6,000 cows, and there are at present only about 200 [and very hardy they must be, too]. The result is that milk, eggs and vegetables are imported over a thousand kilometers, when they could be produced locally in hothouses. It is estimated that in some 15 years the region will be supplying the rest of the USSR with more than 70% of its fuel, 25% of the electricity, 40% of the lumber, and a third of the light metals. The Commissions made a number of concrete recommendations to the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, to the Amur Oblast Executive Committee, and to Ministries and agencies of the USSR.

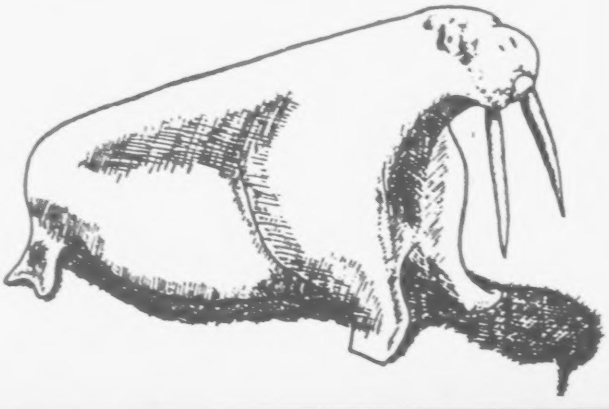
The Small Peoples of the North are not mentioned in the Izvestiia article, but we can guess that when foodstuffs need to be imported, whatever can be locally produced would be very important, and that wise administrators would want to bolster and develop the traditional economy. In Issue No. [illegible] of The

Station Relay, and again in No. 4, Ethel Dunn indicated that language policy in the North was important because, at present, those who man the reindeer brigades speak primarily the native languages, and young people are to some extent resisting becoming reindeer herders, fishermen, and hunters. She assumed that this resistance (or the lack of it) might be correlated with retention of the native languages. I. S. Gurvich and Ch. M. Taksami note that a 1980 Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers, USSR, obliges the Academy of Sciences to increase research on the languages of the Peoples of the North, and to create written languages for those groups which do not yet have them. The Ministry of Education of the RSFSR has made considerable efforts to improve the teaching of Northern languages and to create the necessary textbooks and teaching materials (see the Table on page 9 of The Station Relay, No. 4). Linguists from among the Northern peoples are both writing the textbooks and teaching the material to native children. Among the Nentsy in the Nen, Yamalo-Nen and Taimyr Autonomous Okrugs, there are radio broadcasts in the Nen language; in the Yamalo-Nen Autonomous Okrug, there is also a newspaper, and in the city of Salekhard there are regular broadcasts in the native language for people in traditional occupations. On the territory of the Chukchi Autonomous Okrug, radio broadcasts are in Russian, Chukchi and Eskimo, but only 0.3 hours a day is given to Chukchi. The city of Anadyr has TV broadcasts in Russian, Cukchi and Eskimo. In the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, where the Mansi are one percent of the population, only 49.5% consider Mansi their native language, but preserving the language is complicated by the fact that there are four dialects, and their use is confined to the family and to the traditional occupational settings. Among the Nanais, who, as noted in Issue #3 of The Station Relay, are among the more urbanized of the Northerners, young people know the language passively. The Nanai language is once again being taught in Nanai schools, after a hiatus dating to the Second World War. There are 1500 Eskimos, the largest groups of which are settled in villages along the shore of the Chukchi Peninsula. From time to time, the Russian-language Okrug newspaper prints literary material in Eskimo.

Gurvich and Taksami conclude by saying that 15 languages (including some dialects) are being taught in 268 native schools in the North. Limited as their use is, and even though Russian is used by Northerners to communicate among themselves and with Russians, "[e]thnic self-awareness has been strengthened, the overcoming of the former cultural isolation of ethnic, dialect, and territorial groups within certain peoples has been accelerated, thereby strengthening their ethnic unity. The free development of Northern languages and the widespread use of Russian aids in the active acceptance by the Peoples of the North of many international elements of material and non-material culture."

V. KADZHAIA, "Iskoronit' psikhologiiu vremenshchikov," ["Root Out the Psychology of Transients"], Izvestiia, 29/IV/86: 3.

I.S. GURVICH and Ch.M. TAKSAMI, "Sotsial'nye funktsii iazykov narodnostei Severa i Dal'nego Vostoka SSSR v sovetskii period," ["The social functions of the languages of the Peoples of the North and Far East in the Soviet period"], Sovetskaia etnografiia, 1985, No. 2, pp. 54-63.



FREUD AND RELIGION

In our last issue, in the article "Refresher Courses for Physicians," we promised more details on the question of the Soviet attitude toward Freud, intrigued as we were by a suggestion that Freud had been relegated to the realm of anti-religious propaganda.

A recent article by Martin A. Miller shows that in the 1920s, long theoretical articles were written both to show that Freudianism and Marxism were compatible and that they were not. One of the people arguing for the possibility of a synthesis of Freudianism and Marxism was M. A. Reisner, who was an expert in constitutional law and was responsible for drafting legislation on the separation of church and state and was one of the authors of the first Soviet constitution. According to Miller, Reisner thought Freud's work was original because he analyzed "the process by which unconscious erotic fantasies in childhood can reemerge later in the individual's development in the form of religious commitment.... Individuals who turn to religion are frequently seeking solace and relief from the burden of unresolved and highly ambivalent conflicts." [In fact, in large measure, Soviet sociologists of religion seemed to have adopted at least the latter half of this formulation, stressing the economic origins of conflict. They tended to explain the continued presence of these conflicts in Soviet society as a survival of the old order.]

As Miller explains it, Soviet psychologists, psychiatrists, and an astonishingly wide variety of intellectuals were seeking a Marxist psychology of man, and the debate spilled over into politics. One political proponent of Freudianism was Leon Trotskii, who, in 1927, just before he lost out to Joseph Stalin, argued that Freudianism was a working hypothesis that experimental procedures would later validate; in the meantime, psychoanalysis should not be declared incompatible with Marxism simply because the former is based on deductions and conjectures. Miller concludes that Freud on the one hand and Marx and Lenin on the other were interested in two different types of conflict, because Freud "looked at the opposite side of the spectrum for the sources of these difficulties -- the interior realm of the unconscious where the battleground was a kind of civil war, man against himself. Until some way could be found to bridge the ideological gap between these fundamentally opposed worldviews, the Soviet attempt to fuse Marx and Freudian theory was destined to remain a vain struggle."

There is, however, a slight indication that, like many debates of the 1920s that were squashed, the debate over the ideological characteristics of Freudianism could surface again. In 1985, M. A. Popova's Freidizm i religiia [Freudianism and Religion] was published in Moscow in a fairly large edition (for a scholarly book) of 24,500 copies. Its cover declares, "A critical study of Freud's concept of religion is a necessary condition for a Marxist-Leninist evaluation of the psychoanalytic method as a whole." Miller says that the nine-volume Russian edition of Freud's works published in the 1920s remains the only officially approved translation. Its possible rarity may explain why most of Popova's citations are in English. On the other hand, she may not read German. She mentions only in passing the debates of the 1920s which are the subject of Miller's article, but essentially she reexamines the question of whether Freud was a materialist. She concludes that "his anti-historicism and lack of understandng of the social nature of the phenomena studied reduce the scientific value of his work to nothing," but along the way she seems quite well aware that many Westerners question Freud's scientific foundations. Though she calls Freudianism "a secular form of the religious worldview," she makes Freud sound much more attractive that Carl Jung, who is presented as believing that neuroses are a consequence of the loss of a religious view of the world. Freud, on the other hand, did not distinguish between psychic health and disease, since "neurotics suffer from the same complexes with which we healthy people struggle," the whole problem being one of degree.

On the whole, Popova's presentation of Freud's views seems a fair one. Her discussion of him as a man contains one detail with some echo in the status of Soviet Jews: she quotes him in an interview in 1927 as saying, "My language is German. My culture and my nationality are German. I considered myself intellectually German until I began to notice the growth of anti-Semitic prejudices in Germany and Austria. Since then I no longer consider myself German. I prefer to call myself a Jew." Popova dismisses speculation that Freud was in early childhood much attracted to Catholicism (influenced by a nurse), and even considered converting to Catholicism. Freud, she says, may have in later life preferred a known enemy (the Catholic Church) to Fascism; Jung, in contrast, flirted with the Fascists. She says of Jung that "his mistrust of reason, logic and science often turned into a frank, highly militant obscurantism."

A few concluding pages are devoted to Erich Fromm (who made some attempts of his own to reconcile psychoanalysis and Marxism) -- pages which stress Popova's basic position, namely that Freud's attempts to move away from religion only resulted in a return to religion by his followers or competitors, proving that "independently of the subjective intentions of the scholar, any departure from the principles of materialist philosophy inevitably leads to a slip into fideism [a doctrine which holds that only the things one cannot know through reason are ultimately important]."

Popova's book may not be directed at the new generation of Soviet psychiatrists at all, but the bare figures given in the article on "Refresher Courses for Physicians" in our last issue, which imply that the majority of psychiatrists in the sample had taken more than one refresher course, and that most of them are relatively young, suggest that a new debate on the nature of Soviet men and women could begin again with a whole new cast of characters.

MARTIN A. MILLER, "Freudian Theory Under Bolshevik Rule: The Theoretical Controversy During the 1920s," Slavic Review, 1985, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 625-646.

M. A. POPOVA, Freidism i religiia, [Freudianism and Religion]. Moscow, 1985.

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LARGE FAMILIES

The fact that the Soviet regime would like to increase the birth-rate is well known, but in some parts of the country the average family size is a little more than one child per family. Uchitel'skaia gazeta [Teachers' Newspaper] suggests that there may be a backlash against large families, because the newspaper has received some mail commenting about the unwillingness of the Parents' Committee of the schools to support these children by giving them free tickets to various cultural events. One response is "Why should others pay to entertain Mr. B's children?"

The reporter answers: yes, it seems that we are for the children, but only if they are not really in need of help. He goes on to describe how for five years the Social Security Office in Babushkin Raion of the city of Moscow, having lost the documents for the Shorin family, consisting of parents and nine children, has not been paying stipends for the children. Only Nikolai Shorin is working; Tanya Shorin is sitting with the last baby. The Shorins are behind on their rent (paid to the state), and as a result, money has been withheld from Nikolai's wages. Nikolai has been told by higher agencies that this is illegal, but so far, no one has helped him. His wages are 220 rubles a month; state aid for the four youngest amounts to 48 rubles; aid from the local Social Security Office for Nikolai Junior is 10 rubles; the eldest daughter gets a stipend of 30 rubles to study, making 308 rubles a month. Deducting the debt of 100 rubles leaves 19 rubles a month per family member [very much below the average], or 63 kopeks a day for everything, including food. Good-natured Nikolai Senior says that friends and family have been helping out. Six chickens and a cock live on their balcony, so that at least there are eggs for breakfast. The head of the local Social Security Office, after much prodding, sent a letter saying that they could put some of the children in a boarding school at full state expense. The Shorins only have 49 square meters of living space, but the new apartment promised them has not materialized. Shorin has been told that he could buy a family car immediately (if he had 9,000 rubles) -- a sign of his privileged state --but in the meantime, the cooperative in which he has rights to work a garden and live in a summer house [such cooperatives are common in Soviet cities] has excluded him from the rolls for non-payment, without letting him speak in his defense at the meeting. The people at the local Social Security Office are definitely hostile: While handing Tanya Shorin another medal for having borne another child, they asked her, "How can you have so many children? What are you thinking of, woman?" The reporter ends his report by saying that that in Vitebsk, the chairman of the City Executive Committee had given a two-storey house and furnishings worth 300,000 rubles to a local family with many children, and the rent was assumed by the factory at which the head of household worked. Other problems the family had were also solved. What is the difference between the Moscow and Vitebsk City Executive Committees? That latter can think in terms of good of the state and of humanity during office hours and beyond.

The object-lesson here is clearly directed toward government workers who do their jobs less than competently or tactfully, as we see by comparing it with another case. Aza Vasilev'na Pel'cher, who lives in Budennovsk, in Stavropol' Krai, was given the keys to a "new" house in October 1982, in the midst of considerable fanfare (the event was filmed for TV, and outtakes reveal that even as she was expressing her thanks for the keys, workers were feverishly trying to cover up defects in the remodelling of the house). She was on TV because in 1982, her youngest child (the tenth) cut off two fingers while chopping a fishing hole in the ice at the lake, and 33 hours later, doctors successfully sewed the fingers back on in a seven-hour operation. Central Television's film, titled "What is Happiness?" has a scene in which the chairman of the City Executive Committee tells Mrs. Pel'cher that she has earned her new house. All of her children are musically inclined, two are preparing for careers in medicine, and one, having helped to raise the youngest children and having worked as a secretary, is now entering teacher training. In short, it's a family to be proud of. However, the official attitude toward Mrs. Pel'cher changed markedly when she begins to complain about her new home (all the waste from the house, instead of going into the community sewer, ends up under the house, and the foundation and walls are splitting open; gas and water, which had been promised, never were installed.) On December 6, 1985, an offensive article blaming Mrs. Pel'cher for the unsanitary condition of her home was published in the local paper, and she was fined 30 rubles. When her husband asked how they were expected to feed the children, he was called to a meeting at his place of work and told that if he didn't clean up, he'd be evicted.

In this instance, the reporter says that Mrs. Pel'cher's complaints are seen locally as an attempt to undermine the authority of the City Executive Committee, whose chairman, Starodubtsev, is well thought of in the Party. Starodubtsev thinks he's in the right: "... the city gave her a house, and she, instead of thanks, covers me with complaints on all sides. We built a separate house for her in a year, and we have a waiting list of 4500 persons. The average wait for an apartment is 12 years." In fact, the reporter discovers, there are four other families in Budinovsk with ten children, eight families with nine children, and 13 families with eight. Though they are on a special list, this is established state policy and not a mark of Starodubtsev's favor. Though the people who gave false information to the local paper were reprimanded, nobody is really sorry.

Before he goes away, the reporter visits the place where the family lived before, in a service cottage which could be heated only by dragging 18-20 buckets of water to the roof; even then the house was poorly heated and they often slept fully clothed. Bathing and cooking were also difficult because of the family's size. The father, the sole wage earner, received 80 rubles a month, and 12 rubles in bonus money. [According to the Soviet system, wages are supplemented by bonuses, awarded for extra or exceptional work.] Things got a little better when the three youngest were placed in a boarding school [a move the reporter on the Shorins' case considered inadequate], and the older children started going to a neighboring school, in Praskoviia, five kilometers there, five kilometers back, on foot, across an irrigation ditch. At some point, the secretary of the raion Executive Committee erected a metal bridge over the ditch, and now, next to the kindergarten in Praskoviia, a really new house will be built.

Here, once again, the real story is not how hard it is to raise a large family, even with a state subsidy. The real story is the differing attitudes of different leaders, and the ways in which scarce resources like housing get allocated.

N. SOLOMKO, "Prostaia arifmetika i vysshaia matematika," ["Simple arithmetic and Higher Mathematics"], Uchitel'skaia gazeta, 15/III/86: 3.

[Iu. ORLIK, "Dom u iara," ["The House on the Lakeshore"], Izvestiia, 6/V/86: 3.

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Introduction to Soviet Ethnography edited by Stephen P. Dunn and Ethel Dunn, two volumes, 708 pages, published by the Station in 1974, $10.00. Contains 17 translations from Soviet ethnography, folklore, and theory of history. The editors have included an extensive article on the intellectual tradition of Soviet ethnography, and have given each of the six parts of the collection an introductory note. A glossary and an 11-page list of recommended readings in English along with illustrations and maps enhance the volumes for the non-specialist.

The Study of the Soviet Family in the USSR and in the West (Slavic Studies Working Paper No. 1), published by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in 1977, 75 pages. A highly critical study, documenting Soviet research on the Soviet family since the Revolution to the mid-1970s. Western research in the field is considered inadequate. The 183 footnotes also contain references to translations from Russian into English.

The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production by Stephen P. Dunn, published by Routledge & Kegan Paul in 1982, 154 pages, $9.95*. Drawing on a large body of Soviet writing on historiography, the author develops a critical analysis of the issue, and introduces important corrections to the accounts hitherto available in the West. His work should be of major interest to students of Soviet politics, economists and Marxists.

History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917) by A.I. Klibanov, translated by Ethel Dunn, edited by Stephen P. Dunn, published by Pergamon Press in 1982, 450 pages, $49.50*. Contains a preface by Klibanov, an introductory article by Ethel Dunn, 4 specially drawn maps, a glossary of Russian terms, and the most extensive bibliography of works on the topic since the Revolution. Spiritual Christians (Khristovovers, Dukhobors and Molokans), Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Pentecostalists, and Adventists are discussed in considerable detail. There is no other book like it in English.

*20% discount for orders placed directly with the Station.

From Childhood to Centenarian by Paula Garb, published by Progress Publishers, 1984, 182 pages. [The paperback edition will have a different title and publisher and will sell for $8.00.*] This is a study of child-rearing practices in Soviet Abkhazia, in the Caucasas. Garb interviewed a large number of long-lived Abkhazians, and obviously relished her work. Many of the photographs are quite charming and some include the author.

Soviet But Not Russian: The Other Peoples of the Soviet Union, by William M. Mandel, published by University of Alberta Press and Ramparts Press, 1985, 382 pages, $15.00.* This book is based on interviews in the Soviet Union, and a wide range of ethnographic and historical materials. The author is a well-known translator, journalist and broadcaster on Soviet affairs.

The Russian New Right: Right-Wing Ideologies in the Contemporary USSR, by Alexander Yanov, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1978, 185 pages, $5.95.* This is a history and analysis of the current manifestations of Russian nationalism in the Soviet context, in relation to its nineteenth century reforms. Both the "establishment" and the "dissident" forms of Russian nationalism are considered.

The Origins of Autocracy: Ivan the Terrible in Russian History by Alexander Yanov, translated by Stephen P. Dunn, published by the University of California Press in 1981, 352 pages, $19.95.* Yanov worked as a political journalist and was educated as a historian in the Soviet Union; since 1974, he has lived in the United States. As the author says in his book, "What interests me in history is its bearing on the present--and, above all, on the future. And for this reason I see my task not so much as one of describing the past, which has been done innumerable times, as of reconstructing it in its possible alternative combinations."

The Drama of the Soviet 1960's: A Lost Reform by Alexander Yanov, translated by Stephen P. Dunn, published by The Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1984, 141 pages, $8.50.* This is a detailed account of some attempted reforms in Soviet agriculture, which are in part still under discussion. The author, as a Soviet journalist, took an active part in the debate on these reforms, and observed their operation first-hand.

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